

# SNAPS

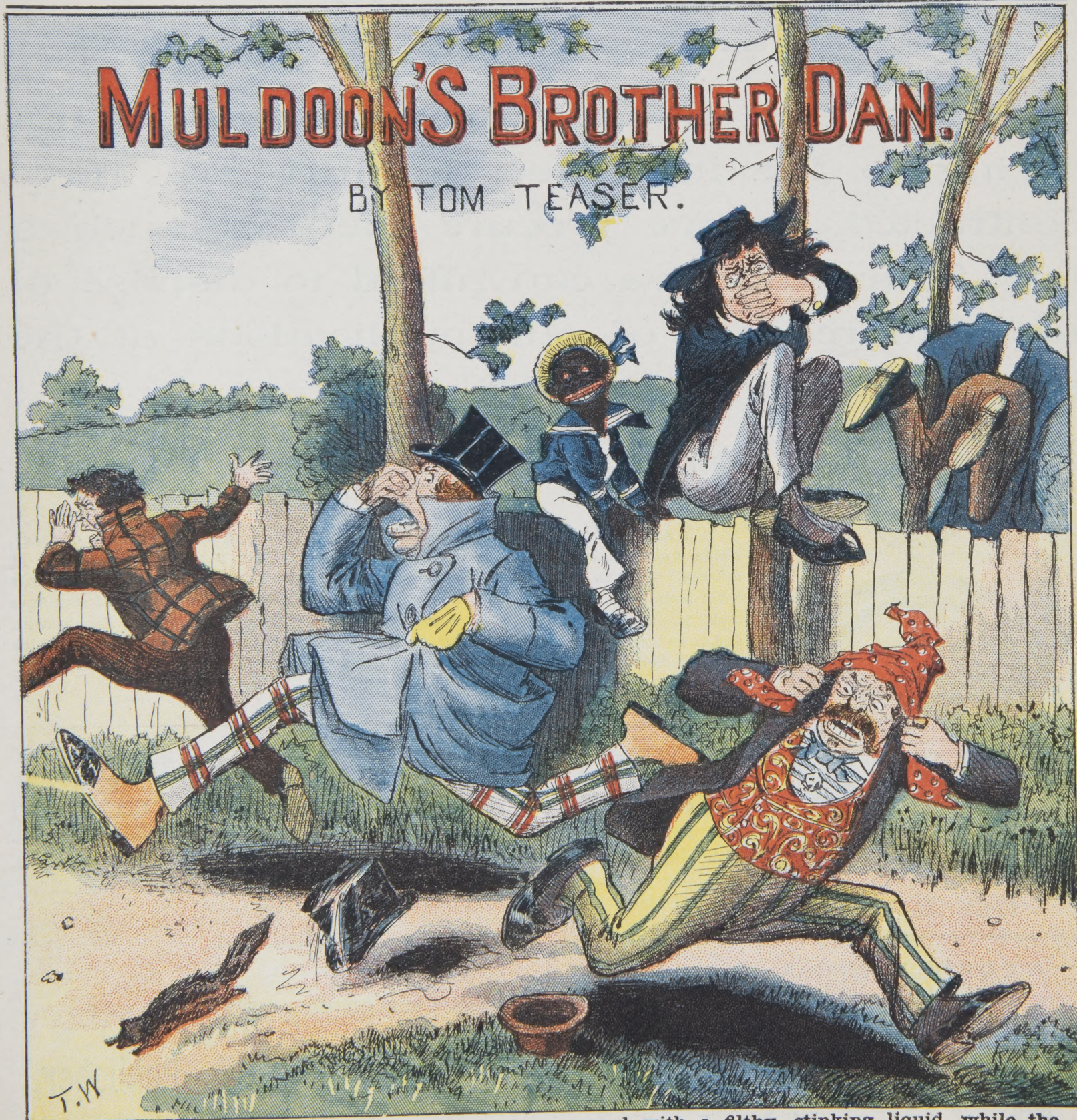
A COMIC WEEKLY OF COMIC STORIES BY COMIC AUTHORS.

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No. 68.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 23, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.



All that they could realize was that they were covered with a filthy, stinking liquid, while the animal which had ejected it was rapidly disappearing from view on a run.



# A Good Watch for One Dollar!

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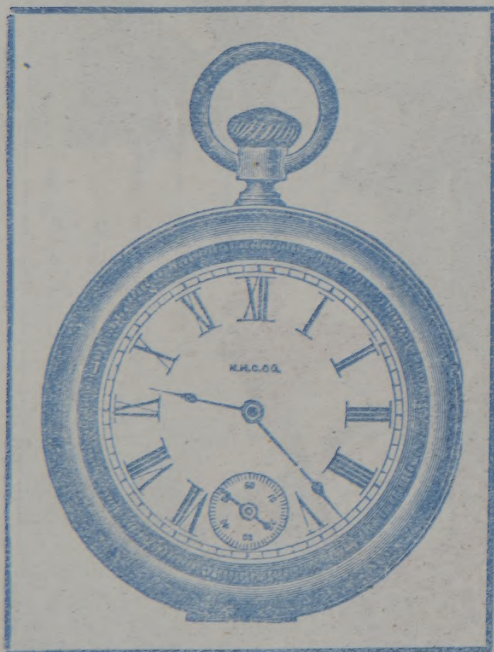
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## CHAPTER I.

"Be Heavens, it is me long-lost brother!"

"Terry, is it ye?"

"Is it I? Luk at me, ye rascal. Arrah, but I'd know yez anywhere!"

"How?"

"Ye have all av the Muldoon family characteristics."

"An' fhat are they?"

"Big fate, big head and whisky in yer breath. Shake hands again, ye bit av grane from the ould sod."

The last speaker was Muldoon.

The other was his Brother Dan, just arrived from Erin, and the scene was Castle Garden, on a lovely spring day.

The big emigrant ship which had brought so many from old scenes and old associations to the new life and new people of our great republic was just discharging its human cargo, and Dan Muldoon was almost the first man to put foot upon free soil.

Just here let us pop in a pen picture of Dan—not a long one, but just long enough to start the story with, for you will find out more about him as our tale progresses.

Dan was several years younger than his brother.

He was also smaller in size, and instead of whiskers all around his face, he confined his hirsute ornaments to what are familiarly called "sluggers," that is, small cheek whiskers just extending to the ear.

He was ignorant—but quick to learn—simple as a child, somewhat hot-tempered, but soon over it, true to a friend as a dog is to its master, and a broth of a boy in a fight.

He had come over with hardly a cent, but it made no odds to him. "Light of heart—light of pocket," appeared to be his motto.

With the above skeleton sketch I will leave it to himself to unfold his traits and characteristics to our readers, and I hope you will soon become firm friends.

The two brothers shook hands heartily.

"Where's yer baggage?" presently queried Muldoon.

Dan smiled.

He held up a stick, to which was tied a small bundle.

"All there," said he.

"Begob it will not be necessary, thin, to hire an express wagon," grinned Muldoon. "Let us promenade out upon the concourse, and charter a horse car."

"Smash yer baggage?" derisively yelled a small boy at this juncture, addressing Dan. "Smash yer baggage?"

Dan scratched his head.

"Shure, I can't understand the ways av the gossoons av this place," said he. "Phwat does he mean by it? Jist before I met ye a red-headed imp av the Ould Nick yelled out: 'Hey, ye terrier, smash yer baggage?'"

"What did ye do?" laughed Muldoon.

"Faix, I smashed him!"

"Ye will soon larn the ways av the city," Muldoon assured; "he only wants to carry yer bundle."

"I'll carry it mesilf," was Dan's reply, and off walked the pair.

About fifty emigrants had been gathered in a group near by, patiently regarding Dan and his brother.

Dan was evidently acquainted with them, for as he started off he nodded to them.

Plainly the nod was a signal, for the group immediately broke up and followed on behind the pair.

In fact, it was a procession.

Muldoon and Dan walked proudly in front, while alongside and behind flocked the emigrants, all carrying some sort of a bundle.

And the emigrants were of various nationalities. There were Irish and German, French and Italian, Spanish and Danes, and one particularly ferocious appearing Pole, who was half hid in a big fur mantle which was wrapped around him.

Such a parade could not long pass through a New York street without attracting attention.

People began to stop and look, and the street boys to jeer scornfully.

"Hey, Paddy, it's a circus!"

"Would you look at the dog show!"

"They're furrin pedestrians!"

"They're checked right through for the Dime Museum!"

"Wonder are they alive?"

"Why hain't they got a band?"

"Band—what do they want of a band? It's a funeral."

"Look at the old corpse ahead with the ulster."

Muldoon overheard the remark.

As he was clad in a most dizzy and heart-breaking ulster, he naturally considered the remark to be personal.

He had been so wrapt up in the sense of his own greatness that he had failed to notice the pageant in his rear.

But the ungentle remark above aroused him from his fit of vanity.

He looked back and beheld the living wax works at his heels.

He immediately stopped.

"Bedad, a toy store has bust up," said he; "all av the chromos are marching in behind us. Wud ye luk at the pictur in the fur cloak! I wonder how much it would take to kill him?"

Dan smiled grimly.

"Troth, it's all roight," said he.

"What is?" asked Muldoon.

"The leddies and gents behoind."

"Who are they?"

"Frinds of moine."

"May Heaven perfect ye from yer frinds, thin. Where did ye pick the aquarium up?"

"On board ship."

"But what do they mane by following av ye? Ye haven't another wan of them in yer bundle?"

"No," said simple Dan, "but I axed thim to come and stay with me for a few days."

"Have ye hired Central Park as a residence?"

"Why, no—I axed them to come to your house."

Muldoon's face could not have worn a greater expression of astonishment if an elephant had walked up to him and asked him for a chew of tobacco.

"Dan Muldoon," said he, grasping his brother by the shoulder, "do yez mane to say ye asked the whole collection of statuary to visit me?"

"Yis," faintly replied Dan, seeing that his brother did not appear to be extra pleased.

"Whirra—whirra!" groaned Muldoon; "I have heard that there was maniac blood in our family, and it has broken out at last. Dan Muldoon, ye are crazy. Do ye think I kape ayther a museum or a hotel? Why, the police would pull me boarding house at wanst if iver I sheltered such a mob!"

Poor Dan's face looked very sad at his brother's words.

"Why, ye wrote me saying ye had a house as big as a castle," he said, "and I thought ye wud kape the poor craythers for awhile. They were good to me on board the ship. Besides, I promised them worruk."

"What at, for Heaven's sake?" asked Muldoon; "did ye intend to start a menagerie?"

"Oh, no," Terrence; I said ye wud get thim all places."

"Me?"

"Yis."

"What iver put such a wild idea into yer head?"

"Didn't ye write me that ye wur the biggest politician in New York; that ye carried the city in yez pocket, and the mayor sint a bye to black yez boots every morning? I tould thim ye wud get thim all a job—President, or Congressman, or something or other."

To see Muldoon at this piece of news was to see a living picture of dismay.

"Dan—Dan, ye simple soul," said he, "ye don't understand politics. There are seventeen men for ivery place, and they all



want heavy pay and light work and are niver satisfied. 'Twas only Tuesday I got Denny Mallahan a political job watching the City Hall tower to see that nobody stole the clock, and Wednesday night he came to me kicking like a steer, and saying that the duties av the position were too arduous."

Dan looked as if he was all ready to cry.

"Ye won't kape thim at your house?" questioned he.

"No, niver."

"Or get them worruk?"

"Not aven hardly iver."

"Thin," exclaimed Dan, "what am I going to do wid 'em?"

"Sell 'em to a junk-shop," was on Muldoon's lips, but he repressed it, for he saw Dan felt very much cut up. So he said:

"Ye have got to get rid of the mob somehow."

Just here an old German, who had been stalking calmly along next to Dan, spoke up, in very bad English:

"We almost to der halls?"

"What did the beer-sign say?" Muldoon asked.

"He wants to know if we are almost to yer house," interpreted Dan.

"Tell him we have eight more miles to go," joked Muldoon.

"Hello, here comes the picthur in the fur cloak."

Sure enough, the Pole worked his way to the front.

He knew a little English, and had caught fragments of the conversation between the Muldoons.

His suspicions were aroused, and he advanced to find out how matters stood.

"How do?" he affably said to Muldoon; "me spik ver' goot English."

"Splindid," returned Muldoon.

"Sanks. You be dam. Me know much English. Son of a gun," and the Pole smiled affably as he thus displayed his proficiency in our tongue.

"Begob, yez proficiency is immense," complimented Muldoon.

"If ye were put into a cage I could raffle off me parrot. Know any more?"

The Pole racked his brain.

"Yes, sar. Go to the devil," he proudly said.

"Dan," gasped Muldoon, "just yez explain to the professor that I ain't—that he and his friends can't come and roost at me mansion. It breaks me heart, but whisper it gently. Mother won't be plazed."

Dan saw that his brother meant what he said.

He started to inform the Pole of the sorrowful news.

Dan was not well versed in the Polish tongue. As for the Pole, his knowledge of the English language may be surmised from what he has already exhibited.

It was a case of the blind teaching the blind to see.

At first the Pole could make nothing of Dan's explanation.

He smiled pleasantly, and appeared to imagine that Dan was telling him a funny story.

So Dan went back to first principles, and endeavored to elucidate the problem by signs.

He turned himself into a sort of jumping-jack.

But, at last, when he was tired and sweaty and disgusted, he succeeded in making the Pole comprehend that the pleasant picnic of having free lodgings and being provided with a sinecure by Muldoon was knocked in the head.

Then there was a mad Pole around there.

He jumped about, shook his fur cloak, and got most disgustingly low and vulgar in his conversation.

But as he spoke in Polish, Muldoon and Dan didn't have the faintest idea of the ignominious names he was heaping upon them.

He might be reciting a battle hymn, for all that they could understand.

"I belave he is a jack-in-the-box escaped from the box," said Muldoon. "Luk at the two waltz step he's doing. Forward four, ye foreign speeler."

The Pole stopped his combined exhibition of bad language, insane gesticulation, and mad antics.

He communicated the sad news he had received to his fellow emigrants.

Although they were of different dialects, and different nationalities, yet there appeared to be a sort of universal Free Masonry, which enabled them to understand their purport.

They huddled together and conversed, and made deaf and dumb motions.

"Bedad, the images are holding a caucus," said Muldoon. "I wonder what is the topic under discussion?"

He soon found out.

Almost simultaneously the whole mob made an onslaught upon the two Irihsmen.

Muldoon got hit on the head with a carpet-bag, which nearly laid him out, and an irate old lady of Tipperary stock whacked Dan with a big umbrella.

"Oh, ye thafe av the worruld!" cried she, "deluding us poor people. Whoo! I belave ye are a British spy!"

Muldoon recovered from his blow in a second, and dealt the giver, a sturdy Spaniard, a soaker under the chin which sent him reeling over a barrel.

"Stand the ould daisy upon her head and run, Dan!" bawled he.

Dan grasped the shrieking woman about the waist.

A coal-cart happened to be passing.

Exerting all of his muscle, Dan pitched the mad old girl into it, on top of the coal.

"There is the chromo that goes wid that load!" bawled Muldoon. "Skip, Dan!" and he himself set the example.

Dan tried to follow it.

But he was not as agile as his brother, and the fury of the emigrants was especially directed toward him.

Before he got out of the ruction he was pretty well used up.

When finally he succeeded in effecting his escape, and joined Muldoon, who was waiting around a near-by corner, he presented a lively picture of a ruin.

"Faix, it is elegant haste ye would make," commented Muldoon.

Dan looked at himself with a piteous air.

"When I enter yez house, Terence," he said, "let me walk in the back way. I wud scare the leddies."

"I have suffered meself, Dan," replied Muldoon. "I have lost a rosette off av me ulster and wan av the poker dots have been knocked off av me necktie. But whisper it gently—mother won't be plazed."

"She is been dead long years ago," was Dan's simple reply.

"What will she care?"

Muldoon placed his hand affectionately upon his brother's shoulder.

"Dan—Dan," exclaimed he, "ye have a low forehead—ye don't understand our American language. 'Mother won't be plazed,' is simply a pet worrud av moine. Do ye tumble?"

"Divil a bit. I could walk on me hands wanst, but divil a bit could iver I tumble."

Muldoon laughed.

"We'll have to get a scrubbing-brush and scrub some av the grane off av ye," said he.

"I may be a granehorn, but I'm a man," proudly said Dan. "Let's take a jaunting-car."

"A which?"

"A jaunting-car."

"Ye moight as well expect to see porpoises dhriving stages as to foind a jaunting-car in New York. We'll take the upstairs railway."

"Phwat's that?"

"Why, the elevated, av coorse. Follow me, ye Spanish student."

Dan humbly did, and they proceeded to the Cortlandt street station of the Metropolitan E. R. R.

Dan was filled with wonder at the sight of the railway in the air, as he called it.

He was also very much scared, but hid his apprehension as well as he could: for he did not want to appear green, and besides, many persons of both sexes were flocking into the trains without the faintest evidence of timidity.

So when a train came along, Dan got into it as if he had been used to riding upon elevated railroads all his life.

Near by to where he took his seat were several young fellows—downtown clerks, probably, released from the work of the day, and homeward bound.

Whether Dan's fear was visible upon his face, or whether they realized from his dress that he was a fit subject to play a joke upon, we do not know.

Certain it is, that with various sly winks and sober faces they commenced a general conversation, which ran somewhat as follows:

"How's Harry, Dick?"

"Slowly recovering."

"Got hurt pretty bad, didn't he?"

"Slightly. Both legs broken—collar-bone fractured—arm mashed to a jelly. Wonder he wasn't killed."

"Got laid out upon the road, I understand."

"Yes—train ran off the track. Fell fifty feet into the street."

"Many killed?"

"About twenty. Nearly seventy-five hurt."

"How many trains ran off that day?"

"Only twelve."

"Well, that's pretty good. To tell the truth, I do not like to ride upon this particular train."

"Why not?"

"It's dangerous."

"How?"

"Why, I've been spilled down into the street four times."

"Ever hurt?"



"Only twice. Broke my ribs once, and lost an ear the second time. But I expect to get killed to-day."

"Why?"

"You won't give it away?"

"Of course not."

"Well, the engineer's blind drunk. Says that as soon as we get to Bleecker street he's going to try and see if he can't run the whole train slam-bang into the sidewalk, without hurting anybody. I believe he's got a bet on it!"

"Where is Bleecker street?"

"The next station. I've got my life insured."

"How far is it to the sidewalk?"

"Only sixty feet."

That was enough for Dan.

He made a wild rush for the door.

He gained the platform before Muldoon could stop him.

He attempted to open the gate, and walk off of the car.

But the conductor grabbed him.

"What are you trying to do, you wild Irishman?" asked he.

"I want to get off," said Dan.

"No, you don't."

"I do. Bedad, they mane to run the train onto the sidewalk."

"Well, you'll run onto the sidewalk yerself if you get off now. Go back into the car."

Just here Muldoon arrived.

"Come back and sit down, Dan," said he. "What ails yez? Have ye rats in yer garret?"

"Niver," protested Dan, taking the slang phrase in a literal sense, "the only animal we ever had in our garret was a pigeon."

Both Muldoon and the conductor couldn't help laughing.

At which Dan got mad, and expressed a strong desire to lick the both of them put together.

He was prevented from putting his noble scheme into execution by the arrival of the train at Bleecker street.

Dan got right off at the station.

You could not have persuaded him to ride a block further if you had promised the wealth of the Indies and a pink mule with tassels on its ears.

"Ye will niver catch me on any av yer railroads on stilts again," said he. "Shoe leather is good enough for me."

So they walked home.

Of course the many scenes and incidents of street life in our great metropolis interested Dan vastly, but, strange to say, he succeeded in reaching the boarding house without any memorable adventure.

Sitting patiently upon the steps of the house was a ducky.

He was a small ducky—a little one for a cent, with close-cropped wool, a face black as ink, but beaming with fun and frolic, and he was gayly singing:

"De Gospel train am moving along,  
Punch de tickets of the passengers,  
Come and join de angel throng,  
Punch de heads ob de passengers!"

Muldoon waved him away.

"We want no camp-meetings upon our front stoop, ye tanned Caucasian," said he; "if ye want to sing, go up on the boulevard and warble to the rocks."

The ducky smiled sweetly, showing a most glistening collection of ivories in the operation.

"Me Massa Dan's boy," said he.

"Dan," sternly said Muldoon, "have ye disgraced yez family by marrying a nagur? Wasn't white blood good enough for ye?"

The little moke laughed harder than ever.

"Me no Massa Dan's son, me his vally," said he.

"It is foine valley yez are—ye wud make a better mountain," Muldoon remarked. "But I suppose yez are trying to give me a barney on the Frinch. Yez mane yez are Dan's valet—his servant?"

"Yes, sah."

"Be gob, what a high-toned brother I have. Did a chambermaid and a cook accompany yez, Dan?"

Dan colored up to the ears.

"The bye was on board av the ship wid me, and he didn't loike the job he had wid the captain, so I tuk him wid me," was his explanation.

"Ivery vagabond in the worruld appears to have been on board ship wid yez," was Muldoon's remark. "I don't see how the authorities iver allowed it to land."

At this moment the front door opened.

Mrs. Muldoon rushed out, pale as a sheet.

Disregarding Dan, she addressed her husband.

"Oh, Terrence—Terrence!" cried she, "come right into the house. The alderman is having fits—he swears he sees monkys!"

## CHAPTER II.

"Yis," repeated Mrs. Muldoon, "the alderman has the shiners. He says he sees monkys!"

"I don't care if he sees crocodiles wid wings, Mrs. Muldoon," sternly replied Muldoon; "ye are forgetting yez etiquette, woman. Here is me brother Dan."

"Excuse me, sir," said Mrs. Muldoon; "it is plazed I am to see yez."

"The same to yerself," blushed Dan. "Axin' yer pardon, Mrs. Muldoon, but here is me 'vally.'"

The little negro mentioned in the last chapter advanced with a scrape and a flourish.

"A naygur!" gasped Mrs. Muldoon.

"I ain't a naygur—deedy I ain't," said the small moke. "I'se jess good, ebery bit, as de white folks. I'se a native-born American, only I'se growed up in de shade."

"Faix, he talks loike a phonograph," said Muldoon. "What do ye call it, Dan?"

"Charcoal," was Dan's reply. "He says he ain't got any other name."

"Dat's de trufe," confirmed Charcoal. "Neber had no name—too poor to afford it. Capting used fo' to call me 'Debble' and 'Black son of a gun,' and 'darky,' but I rudder guess dat I prefers de name ob Charcoal."

Just here there was a tremendous crash of glass, and a stool flew through a third-story window of the Muldoon mansion.

It was followed by a coal-scuttle; next came a wash-bowl.

And finally a pitcher, which whizzed through the air, and landed upon the head of a passing old gentleman, to his paralyzation.

Muldoon looked aghast at this shower of articles.

"Who is moving, Mrs. Muldoon?" queried he, as soon as he was able to speak.

"Arrah, it must be the alderman," returned she. "He is trying to kill the monkey."

As if in corroboration of her words, out came a small stool, which shattered upon the sidewalk close at their feet.

"Be gob! the pianny will be coming nixt," said Muldoon. "I must go upstairs and stop the tumult."

So up he went.

Meanwhile, Dan and Charcoal exchanged guilty glances.

Dan's was of reproof.

Charcoal's was of exultation.

"I couldn't done help it," said he.

"Why?" whispered Dan.

"It done got loose."

"How did it enter the house?"

"Through de basement doah. I didn't go fo' to let it go."

What this conversation meant will be seen further on.

Muldoon proceeded upstairs.

A most terrific racket was proceeding from the alderman's room.

There was a sound of scurrying steps, the sharp cry of some animal, and the smashing of missiles against the wall.

Muldoon dashed in.

A pretty tableau for a quiet picture-book met his eye.

The alderman was backed up against the bureau with a hairbrush in his hand, and his eyes bulged out with terror.

He was gazing in fear at the head of his bed, where, perched upon a bed-post, sat a small and very ugly monkey, which was jabbering and gesticulating away in approved monkey style.

The room was a perfect wreck, for most of the furniture and portable articles lay battered and smashed all around.

"Be Heavens, I've got 'em agin!" wailed the alderman.

"What?" asked Muldoon.

"Jim-jims!"

"Ah, go way!"

"It's so. I see monkys! Last toime it were grasshoppers. Now it is monkys. Nixt toime it will be elephants."

With which speech the alderman threw the hairbrush at the monkey.

Needless to say he did not hit the brute, but only put a hole in a picture.

"It's no good!" wailed he. "I can't hit the baste. It isn't a rale monkey—it's a divil! Whoa! Go way—go way! divil another dhrop will I taste! Do ye perceive the gorilla, Muldoon?"

"Av coorse."

"Where is it?"

"Upon the bed-post."

"Yez ralely see it?"

"Yis."

"Ye are not saying so only to delude me?"

"No."

The alderman shook hands with Muldoon heartily.

"I niver was so glad since the cat had pups," declared he; "I



thought I had 'em sure. I expected to see a whole menagerie inside of half an hour."

"Where did you first find him?"

"In bed."

"In bed?"

"Yis; I went down to Casey's, the undertaker's, to a raffle for a coffin last noight, and, faling slapy this afternoon, I thought I would take a dhrop of sleep. Be jabbers, whin I went to go to bed, there was the monkey. I couldn't catch him, nayther cud I kill him, and by and by I began to believe he was a ghost."

"I don't see where he could have flew from," said Muldoon. "Nobody in the house, as I know of, has been investing in monkeys; we have enough human wans."

But it was a plain and indubitable fact that the monkey was there.

It was sitting upon the bed-post, trying to eat a poker which the alderman threw at it, with true monkey grace.

"Ye son av a gorilla," bawled Muldoon, "if yez want to stay here, ye have got to pay yez board!"

In reply, the monkey pitched the poker at Muldoon, sprang over to the wash-stand, and began standing on his head upon a tumbler.

"Get him away from there!" yelled the alderman. "He was picking his toe nails wid me tooth-brush several minutes ago, and ate all the soap. Next, begob, he will be washing his face wid me cologne."

The monkey got away much quicker than the two men expected.

Like a flash he rushed across the room, jumped out of an open window, swung from shutter to shutter for two or three houses, finally going hand over hand down a leader into the street.

A butcher's cart was just passing, whirling along upon one wheel, as butcher's carts generally do, and driven by a young tough in a check jumper, who was trying to run over everybody, as young butcher boys generally do.

The monkey dashed up into the cart, and perched behind the butcher boy.

With a wild yell the boy turned and discovered his new passenger.

He was probably the most affrighted lad about.

He yelled again in terror, licked up his horse and disappeared around the corner, the monkey clinging onto his shoulders and chirping sociably.

The brute was a topic of conversation in the household for quite a while afterward.

Muldoon noticed that every time it was mentioned Dan looked guilty, and tried to change the subject.

"Dan," at last said Muldoon, "do ye know anything about the monkey?"

"Yis," faintly said Dan.

"Tell it."

"It—it wur moine."

"The monkey yours?"

"Yis."

"For Heaven's sake where did you get it?"

"It wur on board ship," faintly said Dan. "A man gave it to me. I sent it up here wid Charcoal, but it got away from him."

Muldoon looked as if he had been hit in the stomach by a sky-rocket.

"Search the gilly," gasped he, pointing to Dan; "he may have an alligator in his pistol-pocket."

Poor Dan blunderingly excused himself as well as he could.

The monkey had been the property of a sailor who wanted to get rid of it, and for the valuable consideration of an old coat it had passed into Dan's possession.

"I thought it moight make a foine plaything fur yez boy, Terry," he said to Muldoon.

"Iver since Edwardo Geoghegan presinted me child wid a pistol, wid which he shot off the top av his grandmother's head, I allow him no presints!" sternly said Muldoon. "But, now the monkey is gone, we will not spake about it. Have ye no other curiosities about yer person, Dan?"

Once more Dan and Charcoal interchanged glances.

"No," said Dan, after receiving a warning look from his sable "vally."

The evening was passed very pleasantly.

Dan was introduced to the boarders, and made quite an impression of a favorable nature.

Indeed, Mrs. Fitz Morris said he reminded her forcibly of:

"The O'Ballywhack of Ballywhackingan, who was hung for sheep-stealing in the year '53."

The alderman in particular grew quite frisky. He was so glad that the monkey he had met with was a real monkey, and not a haunting spirit produced by bad whisky, that he indulged very freely from a black bottle which I am sure did not contain water.

Accordingly, when bedtime arrived, and it was time for the people to disperse for the night, he bid everybody pleasant dreams most sociably, and went upstairs.

In the shadow of the hall he met Charcoal.

"Dey're gone," whispered Charcoal, in a most agonizing voice.

"What?" asked the alderman.

"Dey're gone. Scooted cl'ar out ob de box—cl'ar to de Lawd I couldn't done help it," said Charcoal.

"What are ye giving me, ye coal-yard sign?" roared the alderman.

Charcoal looked dismayed.

"Beg pardon, sah," said he. "I mistaked youse fo' Massa Dan."

"That's all roight," good-naturedly replied the alderman. "Good noight, ye bunch-of-crape."

"Good night, sah," politely replied Charcoal, with a relieved expression upon his face.

The alderman continued upstairs.

He felt jolly and good, and he warbled a song about a Mary Ann, who was a darling and a daisy, and not unfrequently a lamb, in a voice which was as pathetic as a fog bell.

There was a pair of his boots in one corner, and in passing by the alderman accidentally toppled one of them over.

He stooped to pick it up.

His hand was upon the top, when suddenly there was a vicious hiss.

He started back in horror.

A small but ugly-appearing snake came crawling slowly out of the boot. It was followed by a second and third.

His face got as white as a sheet.

"Murder! Thieves! Police!" bawled he. "I've got 'em now, sure! Snakes!—snakes in my boots! Oh, the angels protect me!"

He screeched and yelled, and struck wildly at the snakes with his feet, but they glided sinuously away, and the alderman continued to make enough noise for a fire.

Muldoon was just getting into bed when he heard the racket.

"Oh, do go, see what is the matter!" cried his wife. "The alderman must be committing suicide. Sure he said to-night he wondered how a man would feel wid his throat cut!"

"Begob! if he does cut his throat I'll charge it in his board bill," said Muldoon, starting up and hastily getting into his pantaloons and slippers.

The alderman's room being one story above that occupied by Muldoon, he started upstairs.

He had reached about half way up when some person fell heavily down and knocked Muldoon off his legs.

The person was Hippocrates Burns, the poet of the boarding house, of whom we have spoken so frequently in a story preceding this.

Hippocrates was pale, and shaking like a leaf.

"Ah! yah—yah—yah!" moaned he, as he tightly clutched Muldoon.

"What ails you?" asked Muldoon.

"Oh! yah—yah—yah!" repeated Hippocrates, casting a trembling look behind him.

"Have yez been sthruck with idiocy?" queried Muldoon, savagely. "For Heaven's sake, spake English—I don't understand Chinayse."

"Oh! did you see 'em?" fearfully asked Hippocrates.

"See what?" asked Muldoon.

"S—snakes," answered Hippocrates, making an involuntary jump, as if he had desiered one of the reptiles under his feet.

"The nixt wan I expect will be seeing giraffes wid stars on their tails," murmured Muldoon. "Begorra, niver another drop av whisky will I buy av Casey. There seems to be a whole menagerie in ivery bottle."

He tried to soothe Hippocrates.

"Go to bed, ye young Lord Byron," said he; "tie a towel around yer massive brain, and ye will be all roight in the morning by the bright light."

Hippocrates said he was all right in a temperance sense, without waiting for any morning by the bright light.

Attracted by the alderman's outcries, he had gone to ascertain the cause.

Outside of the alderman's door he had stepped upon something soft and squirny.

Stooping down to find out what it was, to his great consternation he discovered it was a snake.

And crawling sociably over his feet was a second snake.

That was enough for Hippocrates.

His imagination enlarged the two snakes into two thousand. To his mind, and also, perhaps, in his mind, the hall seemed full of snakes.

He fled downstairs and ran against Muldoon.

Muldoon pooh-poohed the story.

Hippocrates wanted him to go upstairs and see.

He consented.

Not a snake was to be seen.

They entered the alderman's room.

The gentleman was in bed with all of his clothes on, the



blankets drawn tight up over his head, and he was yelling like a bull.

"What causes the concert, ye political hack?" asked Muldoon.

"Snakes!" was the reply.

"Begob, it's catching," soliloquized Muldoon. "Where did you see them?"

"In me boots!"

Muldoon examined the boots.

Nary a snake.

"They were there," excused the alderman. "Three big ones."

"They were the product of your disordered imagination," rebuked Muldoon. "If they were real snakes, where are they now?"

"I saw them in the hall," said Hippocrates.

"You are liable to see them upon the balcony, or the Rialto, or in yer socks," sternly said Muldoon. "The next boarder I take has got to promise me to imbibe seltzer only. This house is getting to be about as quiet as a wild baste show. Go to bed, both of ye. What a nice, quiet house me brother Dan will think he's got into."

After this severe reproof Muldoon proceeded downstairs.

He felt thirsty.

A pitcher of ice water was generally kept down upon the parlor table, and there was a dim light always left burning in the parlor for the convenience of any of the boarders who might come home late at night or early in the morning.

Therefore, he proceeded down into the parlor.

He turned up the light and picked up the pitcher.

It was empty.

That is, of the fluid which it was supposed to contain.

But in a second sense it was not empty.

The head of a snake protruded from the edge of the pitcher and lifted its glittering eyes to Muldoon's astonished ones.

Muldoon started back.

He rubbed his eyes.

But the snake was still there when he looked again, and its sibilant tongue was directed at his face.

"Howly Moses!" he gasped. "I've caught it, too. Is it a rale snake or a phantom? Bedad—it has a brother!"

The last part of his remark was incited by a second snake, which was sinuously crawling over the table upon which the pitcher stood.

"Bridget—Bridget!" bawled Muldoon.

"What?" answered his wife, who was upstairs, listening, woman-like, over the balusters.

"Come down!"

There was a flutter of a night-dress upon the stairs, and Mrs. Muldoon appeared.

"What is it, Terry?"

"Luk at the pitcher, ye sylph!"

She did.

A startled scream was the result.

"What do ye see, Mrs. Muldoon?"

She shuddered visibly.

"A snake!" was the reply.

"What do ye see upon the table?"

"Another snake!"

Muldoon looked intensely gratified.

"Thin I am all roight," he said. "Mother will be plazed!"

With which remark he went in pursuit of the snakes.

He soon dispatched the twain, also a third one, which he found lurking beneath the piano.

"How in the devil did they ever get into me house?" queried he, as he gazed at the still quivering bodies of the dead serpents.

Mrs. Muldoon could not think for a while. Snakes are not generally considered a necessary adjunct to a boarding house, and she could not think who had brought them there, or, indeed, how they had got there at all.

Presently, though, a bright idea occurred to her.

"Dan," said she.

At first Muldoon repudiated the suggestion.

"What would Dan be doing wid a trio of snakes?" asked he.

"Dan had a monkey!" triumphantly declared his wife.

He could but acknowledge the fact.

"Faix, I will howld an investigating committee, wid Dan as first witness," he said.

Accordingly Dan was called down from his room, where he was trying to sleep off the effects of his voyage.

"Phwat is it?" asked he, as he came down half dressed. "Is it a fire?"

"Worse," said Muldoon. "Dan, answer me truly, an' yez blood be upon yez own head. Do ye know anything about snakes?"

Dan looked as if he would have liked to be able to sink down through the floor and disappear forever.

"Yis," he faintly said.

"Wur they yours?"

"Yis."

"Where under the skies did ye get thim?"

"They wur on board ship wid me," excused Dan. "There wur an

ould fellow who said he wur a naturalist, and he giv me the snakes as-a raymembrance av him. I brought 'em home in a box and gev it to Charcoal. But the cover came off the box, so they got loose."

"Didn't I tell yez?" said Mrs. Muldoon; "if I saw a winged ant-eater swaping up the kitchen flure I wud know that it wur on board ship wid Dan."

"Dan," sternly asked Muldoon, "what else did ye bring? Did ye take me house for a Zoological Garden?"

Dan protested that the monkey and the snakes were all he had brought with him, excepting, of course, Charcoal.

Then he went off to bed with a lighter heart.

"Troth, I wur afeerd that Terry wud kick about the snakes," he said to himself, "but now that it's all over, I don't care. It's the dread av being found out, which is worse than being found out."

With which great moral axiom, which, in reality, is much more true than Dan thought, he laid himself in his little bed, and slept blissfully all night.

A general laugh ensued over the snake scrape the next day.

And Edwardo Geoghegan came out with a brilliant idea.

There was a slight fall of snow upon the ground, not deep enough to interfere much with travel, but just sufficiently deep to render sleighing excellent.

Edwardo's idea was this:

The whole crowd should go out upon a sleigh ride—no high-toned, blue-tassels-on-your-horses affair, but a regulation straw ride in an old box sleigh.

The plan was eagerly adopted.

Muldoon volunteered to drive.

There were a great many different opinions regarding his ability to do so, but they were not expressed aloud, more especially as he also volunteered to get the sleigh and horses free.

Sure enough, when evening rolled around again, Muldoon appeared with a sleigh and a team of splendid horses.

The boarders bundled into the vehicle on runners.

Dan mounted the box seat alongside of his brother.

Crack! went Muldoon's whip, jingle went the bells, the snow flew from the horses' hoofs, and off went the merry party amid the cheers of the neighborhood.

With the exception of running into a street car, breaking a lamp-post, and knocking down one or two pedestrians, Muldoon drove very well, and proved an agreeable surprise as a Jehu.

That is, till Central Park was passed, Macomb's Dam bridge gone over, and the sleigh a mile or two beyond.

Then, for some reason, the horses took fright.

Muldoon could not hold them.

Up hill the horses dashed helter-skelter, while the tail-board of the sleigh came out, and pell-mell into the snow was spilt most of the sleighing party.

### CHAPTER III.

"Oh!" bawled Mrs. Muldoon, as she took a header into a snow-bank.

"Stop!" yelled Edwardo Geoghegan, as he whirled over the side of the sleigh.

"I'm killed!" protested Muldoon's sister, Mary Ann—a regular little daisy—as she bounced in a most undignified way out of sight beyond a rail fence.

Muldoon did try to stop.

"Whoa, ye devils," shouted he, tugging at the reins; "do ye take this for a race?"

"Hould 'em," begged Dan; "we are going so fast that I'm getting bald-headed, for me hair is all blowing off!"

"Strap it on," was Muldoon's gasping reply. "I can't do nothing wid the horses."

"W—why?"

"They have brick ovens for mouths. Will yez stop?"

The horses would not.

They apparently wanted to see what their best time was, and they were making the trial then.

"Gemme a pistol!" begged Muldoon.

"I only have a pocket wan," stuttered Dan.

"Gemme that—I want to shoot the heads off the bastes."

"Yez c—can't wid mine."

"Why not?"

"Troth, it's loaded wid brandy—not powder."

"Ax the alldherman for his."

"Shure the alldherman is half a mile back wid his head in a snow-drift and his heels in a tree," answered Dan.

"Whurra—but we're dead men."

From being afraid Muldoon got mad.

He addressed the horses most vulgarly, calling them every disgraceful name known in the calendar, and several not known.

Finally he threw down the reins.



"Ye can go to the devil if yez want to," said he.

That was enough for Dan.

"I've had all the sleigh-riding I desire," said he. "I ain't a hog. Begob, I'm sick av sleigh-riding. I'm going to get out and walk."

With this expression of his desire he jumped off.

The last Muldoon saw of him was an Irish vision apparently standing upon its head in the middle of the road.

"Ah, Dan," said he, "there will be a funeral around to your house. There will be weeping and praying, but you won't hear it. Now kill me, ye sons av guns."

This last remark was addressed to the horses.

It seemed to shake up a spirit of obstinacy within them.

From running they got to trotting.

From trotting to walking.

And finally from walking they came to a dead halt, and gazed wonderingly around, as if asking what in the world was the matter, anyhow?

Muldoon's first impulse was to get down and break their backs with a fence-rail.

But he recollected that if he did so there was a strong possibility of his having to walk back to the city.

Besides, the animals seemed perfectly manageable, now that their fright was passed.

"I wonder what it was scared ye?" said Muldoon. "I half believe ye caught sight of Dan's foot sticking over the dash-board. I don't blame ye for running away if ye did."

As a sort of experiment to test the docility of the animals, he turned the sleigh around, a feat which he accomplished, very much to his surprise, without upsetting the whole business.

Indeed, he was so pleased at his success that he felt half tempted to spend the next hour or so in riding around in a circle.

But a remembrance of the folks he left behind him checked his half-formed determination.

"I believe I will consider the sleigh a dead-cart and go back and pick up the corpses," soliloquized he; "from the way Mrs. Muldoon fled out av the tail end av the equipage it wud not surprise me to find out that I wur a widow."

He drove slowly back—the horses as quiet as angels.

Pretty soon he met a bewildering picture.

It was a spectre with mud and snow all over it, and it was limping along with its head tied up in a handkerchief.

"There's a sign for a hospital," grinned Muldoon. "I'll bet me dead father against a live Italian that it is Dan. All me relations are bound to disgrace me."

Sure enough, it was Dan.

He stared in bewilderment at Muldoon.

"Blissid Mary!" cried he, "how did ye ever get here?"

"Dhrove," replied Muldoon. "What ails ye, ye fascinating shrimp? Are yez going to a tramp's ball?"

"It was a wonder I wasn't kilt," sadly said Dan.

"It wasn't a wondher—it was a pity," heartlessly chuckled Muldoon. "Get into the hearse."

Dan obeyed.

They drove on for quite a while, the pleasure of the drive being agreeably enlivened by Dan, who groaned and swore that every bone in his body was broken, and one lung gone entirely.

By and by a sort of funeral procession made its appearance around a bend of the road.

It was a mused and bedraggled coterie of men and women, who looked as if they had been blown up in a boiler explosion and had just struck ground again.

"It's the Chamber of Horrors in a waxwork show traveling for playsure," remarked Muldoon.

"I don't care what it is," groaned Dan. "Niver again will I jump from a sleigh. I'm goin' to die."

"All roight; this is a free clime. A man can do what he plazes."

"St—stop the sleigh."

"What for?"

"I w—want ye to bury me."

"Arrah, brace up; yer worse than a child wid a cut finger," rebuked Muldoon. "Hould yer whist! we'll mate the walking menagerie in a second."

True to Muldoon's word, the procession was struck in another second.

It was the sleigh-riders.

They were all there, but a sorry-looking sight they were. They no more resembled the merry party which had started out from the boarding house than an Indian club resembles a pig's tail.

They were bruised and scratched and shaken up; all of their clothes were torn or mused, and Edwardo's face looked like a map of a fire. He had landed in a bramble bush and been warmly received.

They were also mad.

And the sight of Muldoon, sitting calmly upon the driver's seat, cool and unruffled, served to make them madder.

They all, with one accord, began to abuse him like a pickpocket.

"Luk at him!" remarked Mrs. Muldoon, in as sarcastic a voice as she could assume, seeing that her jaw was swelled out to about double its usual size. "Ain't he a nice driver? It is he that is the purty man who can drive horses! Arrah, it is a wondher, the perfect control he has over thim!"

"Peace, ye snow-queen!" interrupted Muldoon.

"It is him is a horseman!" went on Mrs. Muldoon, totally unmindful of his words. "It is nothing but what he can do wid 'em. I believe if ye shud nail him fast in his sate he could dhrove a couple av clothes-horses widout turning a hair!"

"Will ye shut up?" bawled Muldoon. "Shut yez teeth and put yez tongue in prison. Do ye know what I'll do if ye don't dry up?"

"I don't know, and I don't care. Let me tell ye, Terrence Muldoon, whin I get ye home I'll play wid yer whiskers till yez cheeks are bald-headed."

"Thin ye will niver get home," was Muldoon's reply; "I'll drive down to New York alone."

Appalled at this awful threat, Mrs. Muldoon subsided for the nonce, and the chucked-outers piled into the sleigh.

Several of them inadvertently stepped upon Dan.

"That's roight," groaned that misused gent. "Walk all over me—I'm a sidewalk. Jump on me chist, if ye want to. Ye can't hurt me any more than I'm hurt now."

"What is it?" shrieked Miss Mary Ann.

"I give it up—it wur on board ship wid me," mimicked Muldoon. "But whisper it gently."

"Go ahead—make fun av me," requested Dan. I suppose I'm a circus—ouch! if me leg gives another twitch I'll niver survive it."

For most of the way down to New York Dan furnished the music for the occasion.

He was going to die every five minutes—he found a new bone broken every ten—and at stated periods of fifteen he would give directions for his funeral in a most heart-rending style.

Until at last Muldoon stopped the horses, and solemnly swore to chuck him out into the road and leave him to die, if he wanted to, all by himself.

This cooled Dan off some, and by the time he got home he found out that he was not as badly hurt as he thought himself to be.

You may suppose upon their arrival home all hands wasted but little time before seeking their rooms.

Suddenly a series of shrieks, expressive of the wildest fear, arose from the apartment of Miss Mary Ann.

"I wonder what it is now—more snakes?" exclaimed Muldoon, as he rushed to her room, followed by several boarders.

The door was locked, but he easily burst it in with his knee.

A remarkable tableau was presented.

Miss Mary Ann, in dishabille, was standing on top of a table, waving wildly at some invisible object with a towel.

"What is the matter?" yelled Muldoon.

"Don't you see it?" sobbed she.

"See what?"

"It."

"What the devil is it?"

"The mouse. Ouch, it tried to crawl up my leg!"

Muldoon's face assumed an expression of disgust.

"Ye, too, Mary Ann," he groaned; "ye've been at the whisky bottle. But ye have it lought. Ye only see mice, while the alderman beheld monkeys."

"I did see a mouse," protested Mary Ann.

"Arrah, yez upset from the sleigh has disorganized yez brain."

"No—no it was white."

"What was?"

"The mouse."

"Who iver heard of white mice in a boarding house," said Muldoon. "Do ye expect I can furnish ye wid sich luxuries on six dollars a wake board, payable occasionally?"

"Oh, murder!" bawled Hippocrates Burns, the poet, executing a sort of high leap.

"What ails ye—paroxysms?" queried Muldoon. "Ye are worse than a jumping-jack."

"I saw the mouse," said Hippocrates.

"Ye did?"

"Yis."

"Begob, ye are liable to see anything. Where did it go?"

"Under the bed! There—there it goes now!"

Sure enough, a tiny white mouse ran across the floor, worse scared than those who saw it.

Muldoon hurled the candle, which he bore in his hand, wildly at it.

But the mouse dove out of the door and down the staircase in a hurry, and was soon lost to sight.

Where it went to I cannot tell. Certain it is it was never seen again in the boarding house.

By various judicious words and sympathetic pettings, Miss Mary Ann was finally brought to a comparatively calm state, and detailed



to her horror-stricken audience how she, while getting ready for bed, had been attacked by the ferocious beast.

"I don't know where it could have come from," said she, in conclusion.

"I bet I do," growled Muldoon.

He proceeded to Dan's room.

Dan was in bed.

"Dan," sternly said Muldoon, "if ye wasn't me own flesh and blood, I'd jump on your neck."

"Why?" asked Dan.

"What do yez mane by bringing white mice into me house! Do yez take it for an aquarium?"

At first Dan was going to swear that he had never brought in a white mouse—that he had never seen a white mouse—that white mice, in fact, were fictitious.

But something in Muldoon's eye caused him to hesitate, and to eventually tell the truth.

"I couldn't help it," stammered he.

"Yez couldn't! What a baby it is! Faix, if ye sh'u'd iver get lost in the woods, the robin red legs would cover ye wid strawberry leaves, shure. In what prize package did yez strike the white mouse?"

"None."

"Where did it originate, then?"

"It wur on board ship wid me," faltered Dan. "There wur a small slip av a girl, a quality child, who had three for pets. I took an interest in the colleen, and she grew very fond av me."

"All av the Muldoons are mashers," reflectively criticized Muldoon, unconsciously trimming his whiskers with one hand. "Ye take afther meself. Continue wid the narrative."

"So whin we parted she gave me a white mouse. She called it Arabella. I hid it into me bureau drawer, but it must have gnawed its way out."

"Was the young leddy who gave it to ye of high degree?"

"She wur—a duke at least."

"Thin, seeing it was a nobility mouse, we will say no more about it," declared Muldoon; and happy to escape so easily, Dan turned over and went to sleep.

The next evening a letter came for Muldoon.

He opened it.

It was in crabbed legal handwriting, and was deciphered as follows:

"San Francisco, Cal., April 12, 19—.

"Mr. Terrence Muldoon:

"Your uncle, Mr. Jacobus Patrick Mullohan, died last week. By the terms of his will his property, amounting to some five hundred thousand dollars, is left equally between you and your brother Daniel, excepting a few legacies to servants, and a bequest of one thousand dollars to the Association for Diminishing Chinese. You will please come on to San Francisco at your earliest convenience to settle up the estate. The whereabouts of your brother Daniel not being known to us, you will please communicate with him at once. Most respectfully yours,

"Grabbit and Graft, attorneys,

"No.— Main street,

"San Francisco, California."

Muldoon's first act was to jump up, take a plate off the table and smash it against the wall. Then he took a chair and shivered that to pieces upon the floor.

"Whoop—hurrah!" bawled he. "Oh, let me fight somebody. Smother me wid potteen. Hurrah, everybody!"

"What in Heaven's name ails ye?" anxiously asked Mrs. Muldoon.

"Whoop!" and he caught his wife about the waist and began waltzing her wildly around the room. Bridget, ye darling ould cow, ye shall have a silk dress wid diamond fringe, and a double-headed piano, and a red barouche wid sixteen milk-white ponies."

"Are yez crazy?" asked his wife.

"Yes, wid joy. Read that, Mrs. Muldoon, and thank Heaven yez married a millionaire. Oh, begob, I'll have me socks lined wid silver!" and he shoved the letter into her hands.

She was almost as crazy as he was when she realized its purport.

"You ould birdie!" said she, kissing him. "Won't I have a fur-lined collar and two hundred button French kids, and a red bonnet wid a peacock's tail into it?"

"But," suddenly said Muldoon, sobering up, "I must ascertain the whereabouts av me brother Dan."

"That's aisy enough," rejoined his wife; "he's up in the bath-tub washing himself wid a scrubbing-brush."

"Faix, he can wash himself wid a sapphire sponge now," and off darted Muldoon to communicate the joyful news to Dan.

"Dan—Dan!" he bawled, as he reached the bathroom.

Dan's head appeared over the bath-tub.

"Have yez found another mouse?" he apprehensively asked.

"Mice be domned!" impulsively answered Muldoon. "Ye may keep a room full if yez want, Dan, ye are a rich man," and he communicated the glad tidings to his surprised brother.

Dan took the news quite sensibly.

"Raymimber that God is always good to the Irish," said he, getting out and getting dressed.

Of course the news, when related to the boarders at the table, created a great sensation, especially as Muldoon also announced that the next week he, with his wife and Dan, intended to go west.

"If any av yez want to go along I will pay yez fare," said he, in an outburst of generosity.

His offer was instantly snatched at by two gentlemen.

They were Edwardo Geoghegan and Hippocrates Burns.

Edwardo said he was doing bad in New York. He couldn't possibly do much worse in San Francisco, and he determined to risk it.

As for Hippocrates, he said he had a mythical aunt out in Oakland, California, whom he had not seen for sixteen long years, and he thought it was his duty to go and see her.

So it was determined that the westward party should consist of Mr. and Mrs. Muldoon, Miss Mary Ann Muldoon, Dan Muldoon, Edwardo, Hippocrates and Charcoal.

A new recruit was added, however, the next day.

It was the alderman.

"Mr. Muldoon," said he to the head of the excursion, "have yez any objection to a new tourist?"

"Who is it?" asked Muldoon.

"Meself."

"Are ye going west to dig for Indians?"

"Go west, young man, and fight grasshoppers!" laughingly said the alderman. "I am going to San Francisco on political business."

"For Heaven's sake what is it?"

"The aldermin av the city av New York have appointed me a committee av wan to investigate the growth av the cintury plant on the Pacific coast," loftily replied the alderman.

"Wid what view?"

"Wid the view av transplanting a few dozen av thim to New York, and planting thim upon the reservoir, and all the expinses are paid. How is that for a racket?"

"Iligant!" observed Muldoon. "Alderman, ye are a jewel."

So it was settled that the alderman also should accompany the travelers.

The days passed swiftly by, and Muldoon's house was a scene of packing and preparing for the long trip across the continent.

The day before leaving New York, Muldoon had a bright idea.

Muldoon had visited all of his relatives except his wife's uncle, Mr. Dennis O'Sullivan, who resided in the classic woods of Hohokus, N. J.

Muldoon made up his mind that it was absolutely necessary to bid the old gentleman good-by.

He invited Dan, the alderman and Hippocrates and Edwardo to accompany him. Of course Dan was accompanied by his faithful "vally," Charcoal.

By the way, Charcoal had an entirely new suit; a brilliant idea of Dan's.

It was a regular sailor suit, and inasmuch as Charcoal was going to San Francisco by land, it was very appropriate.

"It's a darlint," enthusiastically commented Dan.

"It's a splendid sign for a Navy Yard!" was Muldoon's comment, but Dan turned up his nose and replied that Muldoon was jealous.

"Ye can't afford a naygur servant," he said.

"I won't have a naygur," replied Muldoon. "I'll have a peg better."

"What?"

"Be Heavens, I'll have a Chinay! Put that in yez pipe and smoke it!"

Dan laughed, and the procession for Hohokus promenaded down to Chambers street and took the ferry for the Erie depot.

Upon their arrival in Jersey City, they found that by one of those miracles which only happen at infrequent intervals there was a train ready to start for Hohokus.

They got on board, and a pleasant ride brought them to Hohokus.

Mr. O'Sullivan resided at half a mile's distance from the depot, and a very ragged boy with a very ragged horse, and a wagon which looked as if it had just emerged from a fit, was very anxious to take them to the O'Sullivan residence for a quarter a head.

"No, me frisky buck," said Dan, "we will walk. Begob, we are pedestrians!"



They strolled along quiet roads and shady lanes for quite a while without meeting an adventure.

At last, though, they did encounter one, and a very unpleasant one at that.

As they passed around the bend of a road they discovered a small animal in the middle of the wagon track.

It was a little thing with a bushy tail and black and white stripes upon its diminutive body.

It stood perfectly still at their approach, and looked saucily up at them with its small eyes.

They gathered about it, all except Charcoal, who got up on the fence to get a more elevated view.

They stooped down and regarded it curiously.

"What is it?" asked Dan.

"It is—it is the cat," answered Muldoon. "Poor pussy. See me kick it over the fence!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

The gang stood regarding the little animal which Muldoon said was a cat for quite a while.

It lay in the road, apparently motionless, and did not take the slightest notice of them, further than to wink up into their faces once in a while with its keen, bead-like eyes.

"I wonder what it is! I niver saw such a baste before," said Dan. "What a nice paint-brush its tail wud make."

"I think it's a woodchuck," said Edwardo.

"I believe it is a rabbit," remarked Hippocrates. "If I had a cage I wud take it home as a present to Miss Mary Ann."

"I think it is a cat meself," expressed Muldoon. "Aldherman, why are ye so reticent? What is your opinion?"

The alderman pursed up his lips and looked wise.

"The baste is a dodo," he said.

"A what?" asked the others, in a general chorus.

"A dodo."

"For Heaven's sake what kind of an animal is a dodo?" queried Muldoon.

"Terrence Muldoon," asked the alderman, "where were yez educated—in a stone-yard, or in a balloon? I thought ivery kid knew what a dodo wur?"

"I have heard of a llama and a horned gnu, and the ferocious whang-doodle," retorted Muldoon, "but niver of a dodo. I suspect it is a fiction av yez brain."

"I have heard of the dodo," suddenly said Hippocrates.

"Yez have?" said Edwardo, in accents of incredulity.

"Yis."

"What have yez heard av it?"

"It isn't a baste."

"What is it, then?"

"A berrud."

"Yez are both wrong," interposed Muldoon; "it is a devil-fish!"

How long the dispute might have continued I do not know, had it not been that Charcoal put his oar into the waters of dispute.

He had, from his post on the fence, been carefully studying the alderman's dodo.

At last he satisfied himself as to what it was.

"Ki!" howled he, "be keerful, Massa Dan. Doan't youse touch de dog-goned crittah!"

"What's the matter wid the Ethiopian?" Muldoon asked.

"Dat's a skunk!" said Charcoal.

"Go way, ye infant coal-yard!"

"Tell you 'tis a skunk!"

"Get out," was Muldoon's reply. "I think it's a baby giraffe. I'm going to kick it, anyhow."

He suited the action to the word.

Raising his foot, he kicked the animal in the side.

What happened next, none of the gang could ever clearly relate.

All that they could realize was that they were covered with a filthy, stinking liquid, while the animal which had ejected it was rapidly disappearing from view on a run.

"Be Heavens," gasped Muldoon, "it was a skunk. Howly Mother, I smell loike a decayed horse."

In fact, the whole crowd smelt like decayed horses, or anything else which is of vile savor and paralyzing to the sense of smell.

Even Charcoal, who had tumbled off the fence in sheer astonishment when the skunk discharged his volley, got a slight dose upon his shoes and stockings.

After the first shock was over our friends tried to rub the fluid off them.

They might just as well have tried to knock over Cleopatra's needle with a feather.

The more they rubbed, the more they seemed to be impregnated with the noxious odor.

At last Muldoon gave it up.

"Oh, if I only had a revolver, I'd follow that skunk to the ind av the worruld," he said.

"No, ye wouldn't," sighed Dan.

"Why?"

"Ye'd get arrested as a nuisance before ye got further than Hoboken."

"We can't go to Mr. O'Sullivan's," mournfully said Dan.

"Of course not," agreed Hippocrates. "We'd stink the gentleman out av house and home."

"Begob, I'll make it a state affair," threatened the alderman. "The idea that a jintleman, and alderman av the city av New York, can't come to New Jersey widout being insulted by a domned polecat. Why, me new hat is a ruin."

"Golly," sighed poor Charcoal, "dis niggah done smell like a sewer rat. Ki! lucky dat it didn't get onto my Pinafore suit."

A council of war was held.

It was decided that it would be an outrage to inflict their presence upon Mr. O'Sullivan in their present state.

Muldoon said that it would be a breach of hospitality, and his wife's uncle would be perfectly justified in receiving them with a club.

So it was determined to return to New York.

They strolled sadly down to the depot, the alderman indulging in unlimited profanity in regard to New Jersey in general, and skunks in particular.

"Wait till I get president," he said. "I'll hire a mob of Italians to kill every polecat in Ameriky. Thin I'll hire a gang of Chinese to kill the Italians, and the counthry will be rid av two nuisances. It is the big head I have for political economy."

They kept very quiet at the depot, keeping to themselves at the extreme end of the platform.

But still there were a great many sniffs indulged in by the few other passengers who were waiting for the train.

"Must have been a skunk 'round here last night," remarked a red-headed farmer.

"A whole family of them, I should say," corrected a smart commercial traveler.

Muldoon winked at Dan.

"We are not suspected as yet," whispered he.

By and by the train whizzed along and stopped before the little depot.

The Muldoons got into the front passenger car and occupied five seats close together.

"It is a splendid bouquet we make," grinned Dan.

"All on board!" yelled the conductor, and off went the train.

It wasn't long before a very disagreeable smell began to permeate the car.

The passengers sniffed suspiciously and looked askance at one another.

It grew stronger every moment.

People commenced to wriggle uneasily in their seats, to hold their noses with their fingers, and to open the windows.

Presently they began to murmur audibly:

"I reckon there's something dead in this car," said a burly countryman. "Jewhittaker, what a smell!"

"Mon Dieu! ze stench was godam," said a little withered Frenchman. "Sacre, it was terrible!"

"I dinks it would be a good plan to take de roof off, und be some fresh air," remarked a Dutchman.

"Oh, Heavens, Augustus!" exclaimed a fashionably-dressed miss, "I shall certainly faint!" and she leaned her head upon the shoulder of her dandy escort.

"If you do, the smell will bring you to," laughed a jolly old lady who occupied the next seat.

"Sa—ay," interposed a lantern-jawed down-easter; "has anybody got a pet skunk about here?"

His remark caused a ripple of mirth, and the passengers broke out in general remarks:

"Soak the car with perfumery!"

"Plant a flower garden in it!"

"Squirt cologne around!"

"Let's buy the next bay rum factory we meet!"

"Schweitzer-kase would be a blessing in comparison to this smell!"

"Put chloride of lime upon the floor!"

"Sprinkle the seats with myrrh!"

And so they went on, while Muldoon and his friends tried to appear totally unconscious that anything was the matter.

But by and by an aged son of Moses got up in the rear of the car.

"Shumping Solomon!" bawled he. "I cannot stand this no longer. It vos vorse than a dumping-ground. Great Goliah! I vas nefer smelt anydings so pad mit my life. My name vos Patrick Levi. I lifes down mit Baxter street, New Yorick. Baxter street vos pad enough, but it vos a hot-house compared to dis."



It happened that right next to the Muldoon party sat a gentleman afflicted with the stutters.

Naturally, being in such close proximity to the cause of the stench, he got the whole benefit of it.

A peculiarly strong odor, caused by Dan's turning around, resulted in his discovering the cause of it.

He jumped up in his seat.

"I want the c-c-c—" stuttered he.

"Arrah, take a gulf or a lake," advised Muldoon; "yez don't want the whole sea, do yez?"

"I w-w-want the c-c-c—"

"Yez said so before. Take it wid my blessings."

Several of the people in the car laughed, and the stutterer got more excited.

By a supreme effort he managed to stutter out:

"I w-w-want the c-c-conductor!"

"Bully bye!" said Muldoon, mimicking him. "G-g-give him a b-b-bun!"

"I k-k-know where the s-s-s-smell comes from," said the stutterer.

"Give it away," begged Dan.

"Fr-fr—from you."

The passengers exchanged glances.

Now that the stutterer had said so, it was incontestible that the unpleasant aroma was particularly noticeable about the Muldoon party.

Several people got out and left the car, while the remainder glowered in the direction of the five victims of the "cat"—Charcoal having had sense enough to go to the smoking-car, where the odor of tobacco was sufficient to neutralize that of the skunk.

Meanwhile the stutterer spent his time in shouting for the conductor.

"Ah, shut up!" requested Muldoon, "or I'll make yez walk on yez hands!"

But the stutterer positively refused to do so.

He wanted the conductor, and was going to have the conductor.

Right in the midst of the racket the conductor arrived.

"What's the row?" asked he.

"S-s-s-smell," replied the stutterer.

The conductor did so.

"Phew!" he ejaculated; "this is anything but a garden of roses. What is the cause of it?"

"Haven't yez got a postal car on the train?" queried Dan, struck by a happy thought.

"Yes."

"Then I'll tell yez the rayson av the smell."

"What is it?"

"The dead letters."

This was an ingenious reply, but unfortunately the conductor refused to accept it as a solution of the nasal problem.

He looked suspiciously at Dan and his companions.

"It's them," victoriously declared the stutterer. They s-smell worse than d-d-dead m-m-mules."

Muldoon got up with the air of a man to whom forbearance had ceased to be a virtue.

He took off his coat and rolled up his shirt sleeves.

"Hold on, Rooney. What are you going to do?" asked the conductor.

"Ventilate the car wid his stuttering nibbs," was Muldoon's reply. "If I hit him once I will assassinate him!"

"Put him off the c-c-car," begged the stutterer; "I'll k-kill him if he troubles me!"

"Do what?" gasped Muldoon.

"K-k-kill you. My n-n-name is S-S-Sammy S-Saunders, and I c-c-can f-f-fight just as well as I c-c-can st-st-stutter."

"Yez can lick Johnny Dwyer, then, but I'll try a bout wid yez. Dan, if I get the best av it don't interfere, but if ye see yer brother being downed, come to the rescue. Hould yer head steady, ye stutterer, till I hit ye a buff in the jaw!"

But the conductor interfered to prevent the proposed mill.

"This isn't a prize ring," said he. "I don't want any fighting on board my train."

"He says I smell," retorted Muldoon.

"So you do," answered the conductor; "so do your friends."

"But it ain't none of his business."

"T-t-tis," stoutly maintained the stutterer. "I p-paid my fare to r-ride in the c-c-cars, but I c-can't ride in the c-cars, with m-men that smell like sk-sk-skunks."

"Thin git out and walk," advised Dan; "ye are altogether too high-strung—ye should thravel in the cattle-train."

By this time various of the passengers had gathered around, and Muldoon deemed it best, now that all was discovered, to make an explanation.

So he told the whole story.

A roar of laughter was the result, but the conductor was in a dilemma.

It was not right to have the whole car scented up by Muldoon and his friends, to the annoyance of all the other travelers.

And yet he could not put the five off.

There was no by-law or regulation of the road which empowered him to eject men simply because they did not smell nice, and if he did put them off they were likely to make the company sick by a law suit for damages, and the company would most probably get square on somebody by discharging him. Altogether, it was a rather unpleasant position.

He solved it, though, triumphantly.

"Would you mind riding up the back platform of the last car?" politely he asked of the quintette.

They determined to make the best of it, and rising, Muldoon said:

"Well, I don't moind. It will give me a good chance to inspect the road-bed."

Dan got up next.

"We can obtain a foine view av the scenery there," he remarked.

"Bedad, riding upon a platform has been me aim in loife," said Edwardo. "I desire to get acquainted wid the mechanism av the brake."

So they paraded out and reposed upon the hind platform for the rest of the way, to the great disgust of the brakeman, who sat upon the step and buried his nose in a vulgar red handkerchief.

Their journey home was but repeated phases of the car scene.

They had a whole ferry-boat to themselves, and the whole street to walk in when they reached New York.

When they arrived at the boarding house, Mrs. Muldoon hustled them into the garret and made them take off their clothes and submit to a thorough scrubbing.

Even after that, when they were half-boiled in hot water, half-skinned by vigorous towel applications and clothed from head to foot in fresh garments, the aroma of the skunk still clung subduedly to them.

In the excitement of the western trip, the little incident was soon forgotten.

The night before the departure a grand farewell dinner was given by Muldoon and Dan, to celebrate their sudden accession to wealth and station.

Next morning, as Johanna, the cook, opened the door, preparatory to sweeping off the sidewalk and indulging in a Platonic flirtation with the milkman, she was surprised to see a mild-looking Chinaman sitting upon the steps.

"Get out, ye haythen leper!" said she. "What do yez mane by roosting on a daycent man's stoop? Go back to the tay store where ye belong!"

The Chinaman looked up to her with a bland and childlike smile.

"Ilish girl offee her nut," said he, sweetly.

"I'll off wid yez bronze head if yez give me any of yez lip!" retorted Johanna. "The loikes av yez addressing a leddy loike meself. Be off wid yez, ye Mongolian!"

The Chinaman smiled more sweetly than ever.

"Mister Muldoon live here?" queried he.

"What do ye want wid Mr. Muldoon?"

"He lib here?"

"Yis."

"Me wantee see him belly much."

"I'll lay me loife he don't want to see yez!"

"He belly much do."

"Who are yez, anyway?"

"Me namee Hop Ski. Mister Muldoon hiree me for him selvant. Me takee care him clothes—washee—washee—cally calpet blag—allee samee Ilishman."

"Do ye mane to say," said Johanna, "that me master has engaged a haythen for a servant?"

Hop Ski insinuated that such was the fact.

"I don't belave it, but I do belave yez are a dirty liar," growled Johanna, but she showed him in with a vicious slam of the door behind him.

"Shure, master's money has crazed his brain," muttered she. "He'll be putting a bloody red Indian into the kitchen next to boss me!"

Muldoon met Hop Ski in the hall.

It was as the product of the Chinese empire had declared.

Muldoon had hired him as a sort of valet, bodyguard and porter, all combined.

And Muldoon took him proudly downstairs to where the other go-westers were eating a hasty meal preparatory to starting for the Pacific slope.

"This is me vally," he announced, with a significant look at Dan, calculated to crush that aspiring young gentleman.

But Dan would not be crushed.

Instead, he laughed provokingly.

"Why didn't yez secure the services av a merman?" asked he;



"if we iver get among haythens they will be taking him for an idol and praying to him."

"Dan Muldoon," majestically answered Muldoon, "ye needn't get so high-daddy because ye own a naygur. Begob, a Chinayse beats a naygur any day. What's yez name, me man?"

"Hop Ski," grinned the Celestial.

"Hop-bitter would be better. But I'll give yez a daycent name. I'll call yez St. Patrick."

## CHAPTER V.

It had been decided that the party should start west very leisurely, stopping at most of the principal cities and visiting the most important features of interest there to be found.

Accordingly, when, after many leave-takings, in which the solemn and ludicrous were strangely combined, the party got under way, it was settled to stop off at Philadelphia.

Taking an express train, they whizzed swiftly over the Pennsylvania Railroad to the Quaker City.

They did not go to a hotel.

Mrs. Muldoon had relatives living in Fifteenth street, and it was there that they went.

The names of the relatives were McDermott, and Mr. McDermott was a policeman. But for all that he was a nice man—occasionally you do find policemen that are nice men—though I never would believe it when I was a boy.

It so happened that the Muldoon tribe made their advent upon the thirty-first of March.

The next day, therefore, was the first of April.

Before five o'clock there came a terrific knock on Muldoon's door.

"Who's there?" he bawled.

"You'll see, you big-headed Mick!" was the belligerent reply. "Open that door, or I'll kick it in!"

Muldoon got into his pants in a hurry.

"Shure, the people who live in Philadelphia are playsant av spache," he remarked. "Who the devil are yez?"

"Long-haired Charley," was the reply.

"What do yez want?"

"My daughter."

"Be Heavens, I haven't got her."

"You have, you brocky-face. You got her to follow you from New York. Open that door, or I'll burn the old shanty down!"

"I say I ain't got yez daughter," repeated Muldoon. "I don't know her, I don't want to know her. Are yez a maniac?"

There was a sound of the whetting of some article against leather, proceeding from the outside of the door.

"What are yez up to now?" asked Muldoon.

"Only sharpening my razor," replied the other; "if I come into that room, and don't find my daughter, I'm going to cut your throat and pitch you out of the window."

"Faix, it is agreeable company he is," reflected Muldoon. Ah, Philadelphia is a nice place. Begob, I'll wake up the ould woman."

He proceeded to do so.

"Bridget," said he, "hide under the bed; ye are in danger of being scalped. There is a lunatic outside who says we have his daughter. Are yez aware av it?"

"Mrs. Muldoon wasn't."

Mrs. Muldoon wanted to scream, and yell and kick, and go into hysterics generally, in that winning way which renders women such reliable friends in times of danger.

"Just gag yerself wid a pillow," ordered Muldoon, "till I open the door for the madman."

He decided, however, that it was folly to open the door without weapons of defense, in case the outsider might take it into his head to do the razor act.

Thereupon, he got his revolver, a poker and a water-pitcher.

"If yez do any funny business, I'm afraid yer daughter will have no father when yez foind her," said he.

Carefully he opened the door, half expecting to get a rap on the nose as he did so.

No ferocious-looking man, with a razor in his hand, and a wild desire to cut throats, was visible.

Instead, Dan, Hippocrates and Miss Mary Ann were giggling in the further end of the hall.

"Where's the man?" asked Muldoon.

"What man?" innocently queried Mary Ann.

"Long-haired Charley."

"Who's he?"

"Domned if I know. Bedad, there war some sucker out here that wanted a daughter. Is there wan in the house?"

A chorus of laughter came from the three.

"April fool—April fool! It was us!" yelled they.

Muldoon's jaw fell, and a second roar of laughter went up as the trio gazed upon the revolver, the poker and the water-pitcher.

"Did ye expect to fight a giant?" asked Dan.

"Or a grizzly bear?" interrogated Hippocrates.

"Or a tribe of Injuns?" said Mary Ann. "Uncle, you were fairly sold."

Muldoon went back to bed again, pursued by the yells of the gang.

Anybody would suppose it would have been a caution to him to be careful for the rest of the day.

But it wasn't.

Before ten o'clock he had been April fooled two dozen times.

He picked up red-hot cents and rushed hurriedly to the door to see mythical men who were not there; he poked his head out of numberless windows to see numberless fires which never existed, and nearly broke his foot kicking an old hat which was stuffed with cobble-stones, and put down in the hall for his especial benefit.

At last he got tired of it.

"Be Heavens, I will fool somebody if I get killed!" was his resolve.

In this frame of mind, he roamed into Mr. McDermott's room.

Nobody was there.

The door of the clothes closet, however, was open, and hanging upon a nail were visible Mr. McDermott's police garments—Mr. McDermott having taken a day off and gone to Bound Brook to visit a sick brother.

His shield was fastened to the coat, and his club also rested peacefully in a corner.

Muldoon was seized with a sudden desire to ascertain what sort of a looking policeman he would make.

Locking the door to prevent interruption, he disrobed himself and put on the uniform.

He surveyed himself in the glass with great admiration.

He was the beau-ideal of a "tarrier" cop.

"Arrah, what an ornament I would be to the force," he said, as he strutted up and down. "I belave I am catching influence from the clothes, for I fale loike clubbing the lung out av the bureau. Whist, but I would take the belle at a ball."

Suddenly an idea struck him.

It was a big idea, and it struck him so hard that he was forced to sit down upon a chair to regain his breath.

The idea was as follows:

Why should he not go into the street and pretend to be a policeman? It would be a gigantic April fool on everybody.

Creeping cautiously downstairs, he got out of the house unobserved.

Imitating that crawl habitual to policemen when on duty, he walked down the street, swinging his club as if he had been a knight of the baton for years.

At the corner, the proprietor of the corner grocery, a burly Dutchman, was sitting out in the sun, totally unconscious that two mischievous boys were busily at work pinning a big red rag to his coat tails.

Here was a chance for Muldoon to exert his adopted authority.

"Stop that, ye young divils!" bawled he; "if I iver catch yez I'll make yez cough up yez socks. Skip, ye rag-fairies!"

"Ah, go down in the sewer and bite rats, ye terrier!" bawled one of the boys as they both ran away.

"It appears that the strate-boys have not sufficient respect for the police," mumbled Muldoon. "Bedad, I don't loike 'em, nayther. It is hard to kape me from hitting meself on the head wid a brick, for I will niver hav another so elegant a chance to lay out a policeman."

Meanwhile the Dutchman had taken the rag off his coat.

"Dose boys beat der duyfel," said he; "dey vill all be hung. Shust a leetle vwhile ago mine frau come in mit a cat tied to her dress. I told her it vos lucky dot it vos nicht a dead horse. I vos much obliged, Mister Officer. If I vos vent mit the store inside mit dot rag on me mine clairk would bust himself mit laughter!"

"Don't mention it," loftily replied Muldoon.

The grocer looked scrutinizingly at him.

"You vos new mit dis beat?" said he.

"Yis."

"Where vos der other policeman?"

"Dead!"

"Mine Gott—vot did he die of?"

"Fell through his shirt and broke his neck!"

"Ah, Himmel!" exclaimed the astonished Dutchman, "vos dot so?"

Then he smiled sweetly, and winked at Muldoon.

"I belave he is a Free Mason," soliloquized Muldoon, winking back.

The grocer appeared to think he was fully understood.

He led the way into the store, while Muldoon followed.

"Perhaps he intinds to presint me wid a gould badge for me executive ability," was the Solid Man's monologue.

It wasn't a gold badge, though.



It was a solid drink of whisky, poured out behind a screen, from the grocer's private demijohn.

He handed it to Muldoon.

It wasn't long before the beverage was out of sight.

"Any dime you want to schmile, shust drop in and do it," said the grocer, with a second wink.

"Begob, my temper will be angelic," commented Muldoon, as he thanked the Dutchman; "I will be smiling all av the toime."

Right below the grocery store was a tobacconist's.

Muldoon happened to think that he wanted a paper of chewing tobacco.

The tobacconist, a wiry little fellow, with a black mustache which fairly dwarfed him, was behind the counter.

"I want a paper av Solace," declared Muldoon.

The tobacco dealer handed it out with a low bow.

"How much?" asked Muldoon, producing a plethoric purse which looked as if it might contain millions, but generally contained about six cents and a brass door key.

The other made a very suave bow.

"That's all right," he said. "It does not cost anything to the police. By the way, officer, I wish you would watch for those young rascals who put a bonnet on my Indian cigar sign, and then set fire to it."

Muldoon promised to.

"If iver I catch wan av the sons av guns, I'll dance on his lungs!" was the practical speech of the bogus policeman.

The tobacco dealer was so much impressed that he made Muldoon take a cigar.

"Smoke it when you are off duty," he said.

Pocketing the cigar, Muldoon walked out into the street again.

"I intind being a policeman for the rest av me loife," declared he.

He strolled along in a very contented frame of mind, until his attention was attracted by a crowd.

And the crowd's attention seemed attracted by him, for at least half of it ran to meet him.

A fat, bald-headed old codger, however, distanced the field.

He grabbed Muldoon by the coat collar.

"Fight!" gasped he.

"Is it for a belt?" asked Muldoon, forgetting his assumed character, "or is it only for a benefit?"

The old fellow looked surprised.

"Fight!" repeated he. "You must stop it."

Muldoon took a firm clutch onto his club.

Begorra! I'll sayson the foight wid club sauce," said he.

He pressed his way through the surrounding spectators to the side of the participants in the rumpus.

They were two.

A man and a woman—husband and wife.

They were pitching into each other in a style which was very unmatrimonial, but afforded great delight to the interested lookers-on.

He rushed between them.

"Hould on!" ordered he. "What is the matter, anyway?"

They were red and exhausted from the exertion of the fight, but yet they could tell him with a volubility which, under the circumstances, was perhaps, remarkable.

"He hit me."

"She scratched my face."

"He said he'd fire the stove at me."

"She wanted to chuck my clothes out of the window."

"He came home drunk and stepped on the baby—said he had no use for it."

"She broke my jaw with a poker!"

"Last Sunday night he said it was the Fourth of July, and blew me up with a firecracker!"

"She goes to picnics with a young horse-jockey!"

"He's never home!"

"She won't work; wants to lay a-bed all day and eat ice cream. Yesterday afternoon she threw a flat-iron at me because I didn't buy her a box of pickled oysters!"

"Didn't you yourself come home Thursday to supper and throw the corned beef and cabbage in the gutter because you wanted turkey and pie instead?"

"I didn't!"

"You did!"

"It's a lie!"

"You're another!"

With that the man squared off and prepared to wipe up the sidewalk with his darling wife. Indeed, he did give her a little love-tap alongside of the face which nearly knocked her teeth loose.

Muldoon promptly whacked him upon the shoulder with his club.

"Hit a woman, will yez?" he said. "No Muldoon iver hit a woman. The safest way is to kick her."

As soon as the woman heard the thud of the locust against her husband's body she uttered a yell.

"Oh, you brass-buttoned monkey!" cried she to Muldoon; "I'll teach you to strike my husband."

With which promise she proceeded to pile upon him and draw paper patterns all over his face with her finger-nails.

In this she was ably assisted by her husband, who also went at Muldoon bald-headed.

The crowd was delighted.

It was sufficient amusement to see a fight between two ordinary mortals, but when a third party joined in, and that party a policeman—a policeman who was rapidly getting licked, too—the joy of the crowd reached its highest apex.

They proceeded to encourage the pair of wedded felicities to knock Muldoon all apart.

"Break up the cop!"

"Slaughter the peeler!"

"Stand him on his head!"

"Make him eat his club!"

"Jump on him!"

"Lick him good!"

"Give him a ticket for the hospital!"

In gentle speeches like these the crowd expressed its sympathies and began to act as if several of its members would not mind taking a hand in the muss themselves.

Muldoon fought bravely, but probably he would have been overpowered had not a shout sounded of:

"Cheese it—more cops!"

Sure enough, coming down the street on a run were two real policemen.

With great unanimity the crowd scattered and fled in all directions, leaving Muldoon alone.

Nearer came the policemen.

"Oh, begob!" suddenly recollected Muldoon, "I don't want to meet the rale peelers. Faix, they wud foind out I wur an impostor, shure."

Accordingly he dashed around the corner, too, ran down the block, crossed a street and entered a store which possessed a large looking-glass, to see if he was hurt much.

He wasn't.

With the exception of a slight dent in his hat, a scratched face, and a tear or two in his uniform, he was all right.

As he stepped out of the door, he beheld Dan coming down the street with a young lady leaning upon his arm.

The young lady was pretty, and Dan was whispering sweet taffy into her ear in the most lover-like style.

"Luk at the Dublin dandy on the mash!" grinned Muldoon. "Ah, wait till I break him all up wid his lollipop."

Pulling his cap down over his eyes, and turning up his coat collar until but a very small part of his face was visible, he strode up behind the loving couple, and tapped Dan upon the shoulder.

Dan turned hurriedly, and his fair companion uttered a cry of fright at beholding a policeman in their rear.

"Daniel Muldoon, I want you!" declared Muldoon, in a disguised voice.

"No, you don't," spoke up the young lady; "his name isn't Daniel Muldoon."

"What is it?"

"Percy Howard Plantagenet."

"Percy Howard Blazes! His name is Daniel Muldoon, and he is a notorious burglar. I want him for bigamy."

"What's bigamy?" queried Dan, who appeared to be in a sort of half-dazed state.

"Having two wives, ye Mormon!"

"That's a lie; I ain't got any."

"Can't help it, ye woman dayceiver, I've got to arrest ye. Come right along quietly; I don't want to poke yer eye out or break yer neck, except I have to."

Dan concluded to make a virtue of necessity. He knew that there was some awful mistake somewhere, but plainly it would do no good to argue the matter with the policeman. As soon as he got to the police station, he could send for his friends, and prove himself not guilty of bigamy.

But first he must bid good-by to the young lady.

"This is a horrible blunder," said he to her. "I'll meet yez to-night anywhere you say."

A red, angry blush crossed the fair maiden's cheek, as she stamped her foot, and replied:

"I guess not. You're a nice sort of a hair-pin, giving me taffy about your name being Plantagenet, and your having estates in Ireland and money in the bank. Get out, you clam, go back to your wives."

Then, with a toss of the head and a contemptuous sniff, she turned away, leaving Dan to his fate.

Muldoon marched Dan along till a quiet street was reached.

Then, dispersing the inquisitive small boys who had followed on behind, he pushed his cap back and turned his coat collar down.



"Whirra!" exclaimed Dan, "if ye weren't somebody else, I wud take yez for me brother Terry. Ye are his dead pictur'."

"I am he himself," said Muldoon, executing a sort of club dance, to the great astonishment of the few pedestrians who were passing. "April fool, Dan—April fool! Ye tuk me for a policeman, didn't yez?"

Dan's face was a map of surprise.

"What will yez be doing nixt?" asked he. "Yez are liable to pin a paper tail to yez coat and play lion, or put feathers under yer arm-pits and swear ye are a mocking-bird! Where did yez get the clothes?"

Muldoon explained.

"It is great intellectual capacity I have," said he, in conclusion. "Watch me fool somebody else!"

Dan said he didn't have time.

Besides, he was sure that Muldoon's great intellectual capacity would get him into jail sooner or later.

And he wanted to get back to the girl he left behind him. He was sure that her anger was only momentary, and when he had explained matters she would be willing to be friends again.

Off he started in one direction, while Muldoon wandered off in a second.

It was great fun being a policeman.

Everybody got out of his way, the servant-girls ogled him slyly, he could help ladies across the street and gently squeeze their arms with impunity, and, besides, every liquor saloon which he went into furnished him with a free drink.

Indeed, he rather abused the graft, and inside of an hour had all the liquor on board that he wanted, and, perhaps, a little more.

He felt good, and roamed down Arch street, arresting placid old gentlemen, to their great surprise, and then releasing them with the information that it was only an "April Fool;" clubbing small boys, and otherwise astonishing the staid inhabitants of the Quaker City.

By and by he fetched up at an apple stand, presided over by an old crone of an Irish woman.

A nice, juicy, red-cheeked apple lay temptingly upon the top of the pile of fruit.

He grabbed it.

"Foive cints," said the crone.

"Bedad, I'm on the free list!"

"Foive cints."

"But I'm a policeman."

"Foive cints."

The pertinacity of the old woman exasperated Muldoon. raising his foot, he kicked apple stand and old woman into the gutter.

"April fool, ye ould apple fairy!" cried he.

"Shame!" cried several of the spectators.

"Begob, I'll shame somebody on the head!" yelled he, raising his club.

## CHAPTER VI.

"Yez will, will ye, ye whiskered monkey!" retorted the apple woman.

"Ye are a brave policeman—so ye are, to foight a woman ould enough to be yer mother. Shure, if a man should say a worrud to yez, yez would go down on yer knees and beg for pardon."

"Oh, freeze yer teeth, and give yez tongue a sleigh ride," replied Muldoon.

The old crone put her hand upon her hip, and looked Muldoon squarely in the face.

"I will not, ye bog-trotter!" was her answer. "Because ye have a big club ye think ye are a bad man. Faix, I don't belave yez could lick me ould mother, and she's ninety."

"Be Heavens, I could lick her if she was a hundred and ninety!" returned Muldoon. "If yez have a lame sister or a paralytic brother, I could lick them, too. Bedad, I'm a tough nut wid wan lung, and I drink blood!"

But the old crone did not appear to go into fits of fright at that information.

"Go put yez head to soak, and clane that dirty mouth av yours with soap!" bawled she. "Why don't yez hit me over the head wid yez stick, yez big-mouthed coward?"

The crowd applauded lustily.

"Go in, old woman."

"Give it to him, darling!"

"Let the big duffer have a tongue-lashing!"

"Chuck him into the sewer!"

"Sling him some more love songs!"

"He wants to mash you, aunty. Don't have him; he's no good!"

These remarks of encouragement braced up the old lady, and made her break out again.

"You've got to pay me for that stand and those apples," said

she. "Ye should be broke for coming up here, and wrecking a daycint woman's business."

"Bedad, if yez come around to me banking house, I will pay ye five hundred golden Louis," answered Muldoon.

She wouldn't have it.

"I want none av yer sweet-scented taffy," replied she; "I want money."

"Thin ye will have to go dig for it in the gutter," was Muldoon's answer, as he turned to go away. "If yez want me note yez can have it—payable four years after death."

The apple woman did not want him to go away, and she seized him by the lapel.

In order to free himself he gave her a slight push.

She started back, and her foot slipping, nearly fell to the sidewalk.

The spectators imagined that her slip was caused by the push, and that it was Muldoon's intention to have knocked her down.

Again the cries of "shame!" broke out with fresh vehemence.

Muldoon made up his mind to get out of the muss as quickly as possible.

"Begob," he muttered, "I don't want to be a policeman. I wud rather be a tailor's dummy, and wear the latest stoils av clothes all av the year round."

With this remark Muldoon boldly strode away.

Before he had gone two blocks a nice-looking gentleman in plain clothes approached him and tapped him lightly upon the shoulder.

"Come with me," he said, in a stern voice.

"And I'll trate yez daycent," sung Muldoon. "Faix, that song wur written about me. But who are ye, and where do yez want me to come to?"

"To headquarters. You are a disgrace to the force."

"Ye don't say so. Faix, I thought I wur its ornament."

"No levity, sir. Come with me."

"Whin I get good and ready. Ye are a previous rooster, anyhow. I have a good moind to arrist ye on suspicion of staleing hydrants. Ye luk just loike a man who wud stale hydrants."

The gentleman threw open his coat.

Upon the left lapel of his vest a gold shield glittered.

"I am the chief of police," said he.

Muldoon wasn't at all disconcerted by the news.

"I don't care if ye are chief av the monkeys," was his answer. "Clear out, or I'll arrist yez for blocking up the sidewalk."

The chief of police was fairly confounded.

Here was a nice, quiet, civil-spoken man to guard the liberties and protect the property of the inhabitants of the quiet Quaker City.

"If you don't come with me peaceably I'll make you come forcibly," was his angry threat.

"What a big crow for a little rooster," replied Muldoon. "Jist go and place yerself on ice till yez cool off."

This piece of advice only angered the chief the more.

He tried to catch Muldoon by the back of the neck.

But our friend knew a trick better than that.

By a dexterous twitch of his leg, a favorite wrestling trick of his, he planted the surprised chief of police upon his back on the sidewalk, to his great surprise and consternation.

"I think me health requires a change of air," muttered Muldoon, and he jumped upon a passing car.

By the time the chief of police regained his wits and his legs, his daring assailant was too far off for successful pursuit, and muttering dire threats of future retribution, he returned to headquarters.

As for Muldoon, he went home as quickly as possible.

Luckily, no one observed him enter the house, and he was enabled to get off McDermott's uniform and replace it in the closet without being found out.

Next day the Muldoon party resumed their flight west, while McDermott put on his clothes and went to report for duty at his station house.

Judge of his surprise when the captain said:

"McDermott, give me your badge. You are under arrest. Officer Richer, take this man at once to headquarters."

"Me under arrest!" exclaimed McDermott.

"You are."

"What for?"

"I don't know. I got a dispatch from the chief this morning. It said: 'Place McDermott under arrest and send him to me when he reports for duty.' That is all I know about it."

Frightened half out of his wits, and wondering what in the world could possibly be the matter, poor McDermott was marched down to Police Headquarters under care of his colleague, Officer Richer.

The chief was sitting in an easy-chair in his office when McDermott was shown in.

"Officer McDermott," announced Richer.

The chief looked frowningly upon him.



"Are you sober to-day?" asked he.

"Certainly, sir," wonderingly replied McDermott, who was a strict temperance man.

"You realize the heinousness of your conduct yesterday?"

"Why, what did I do yesterday?"

"What did you do! What didn't you do? Your badge is No. 12225, isn't it?"

(For various reasons we substitute a fictitious for the real number of the badge.)

"Yes, sir."

The chief turned to a book containing his report for the previous day.

Opening it, he turned to a certain page and read:

"April 1st, 10.30 a. m. Officer No. 12225 smoking a cigar in the street. 11 a. m. Officer No. 12225 arrested an old gentleman upon suspicion of being a desperate murderer. Hit him over the head with his club and released him. 12 m. Officer No. 12225 stopped a horse car, and wanted to see its license. 1 p. m. Officer No. 12225 drunk and disorderly in the street, singing: 'In the Morning by the Bright Light.' 1.30 p. m. Officer No. 12225 stood on the steps of the Continental Hotel and offered to lick any man in Philadelphia for two cents. 2 p. m. Officer No. 12225 assaulted an apple woman."

He read this recital of the crimes committed by officer No. 12225 off in a harsh voice, and then added:

"Besides, Mr. McDermott, you assaulted me last night."

McDermott's face was a study of surprise and wonder, intermixed with fear.

"Great Lord! I never done nothing of the sort," he protested.

"What?" thundered the chief.

"No, sir, I didn't—I couldn't."

"Why not?"

"I wasn't in Philadelphia."

"Where were you?"

"Bound Brook."

"What were you doing there?"

"Went to see my brother, who was sick. I had a day off."

"Nonsense. Half a dozen saw you, and made complaint against you. And wasn't I myself knocked down by you? I saw the number of your badge. You were most vilely drunk and disorderly."

In vain McDermott protested it was not so.

The chief was bound to get square on somebody, and he had McDermott locked up for all night on a charge of assault and battery, preferred by himself.

On the trial, however, McDermott proved by reliable witnesses that he was in Bound Brook at the time he was charged with the various unofficer-like offenses, and was honorably acquitted.

And from that day to this the great public mystery of Philadelphia has been to find out who impersonated him upon that memorable April Fools' Day, and where the mysterious impostor got his clothes and badge.

Needless to say Muldoon was not suspected, for Dan had not given him away, although Dan's attempt to make up with the young lady proved a total failure; the young lady meeting his attempts at reconciliation with a smack in the face from her tiny hand which caused his teeth to rattle.

Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis were passed through by our travelers without any especial incidents worthy of chronicling.

At a small station this side of Omaha a new arrival boarded the cars.

It was a gentleman of about thirty, dressed in a loud velvet coat, checked pants, fancy gaiters, and a dizzy shirt, guiltless of a collar, in the bosom of which sparkled an immense solitaire diamond.

He was square-jawed, wore a heavy black mustache, and had his high hat tilted way over on one side.

He swaggered into the car as if he owned the whole road and only let the other passengers ride on sufferance.

He was followed by a trembling old negro, who carried a carpet-bag.

He slouched up the aisle, eying everybody fiercely and looking for a seat.

All were occupied.

In one sat a dandy—a regular darling, with bay rum on his curly hair, eye-glasses on his nose and a beautiful duck of a bouquet in his buttonhole.

The newcomer stopped at his side and glared at him.

"I want that seat, bub," said he.

The dandy blushed to the roots of his curls.

"But it's mine," he protested.

"I don't care whose it is. I want it."

"But—but—"

"If yer don't get out of that seat in one minute, I'll blow you out of the door. My name's the Hon. Mike Growler, and I'm a hurricane from the Rocky Mountains."

"But where'll I ride?"

"I don't care a d—n. On the roof if yer want to."

The dandy still hesitated.

The Hon. Mike pulled out a big ten-inch bowie and whetted it upon the sole of his shoe.

"It'll only take me a second to carve yer lung out, sonny," said he; "I want exercise, anyhow. Come to think, they're going to start a new graveyard at the next station. You'll do to start it with."

Without another word the dandy got up and left the car, half scared to death.

The Hon. Mike Growler turned to his servant.

"Put that carpet-bag in the aisle," ordered he. "Anybody that steps on it will get scalped. I've got a bad breath."

"Yes, sah," replied the negro. "Where'll I go?"

"Oh, sit on yer ear anywhere's."

Alongside the Hon. Mike was a baby, whose mother had just gone into another car for a brief space of time.

He surveyed the child curiously.

"Pete, you black son of a nigger wench, come here!" he bawled to his servant.

Pete approached.

The Hon. Mike pointed at the sleeping child.

"Pete," growled he, "what's that?"

"Baby, sah," was Pete's response.

"Chuck it out of the window—I've got no use for it," languidly ordered Mike.

Pete always obeyed his master in everything. If the Hon. Mike had told Pete to set fire to the car it is probable that Pete would have started to attempt the task.

So he picked up the baby.

A chorus of exclamations arose from the rest of the passengers, and Pete hesitated.

The Hon. Mike reconsidered his mandate.

"Say, old baldy," he familiarly asked of a hairless gentleman, who sat opposite, "is that kid a boy or a girl?"

The hairless gentleman blushed, stammered, and finally said he guessed it must be a girl.

"Then yer needn't chuck it out," declared Mr. Growler. "Save her. Let her grow up and I'll marry her!"

Just here the brakeman poked his head in the car and yelled:

"Praijunctiontenminutesforfreshments."

Which, being interpreted, meant:

"Prairie Junction. Ten minutes for refreshments."

Most of the male travelers got off.

Among them were Muldoon, Dan, Hippocrates Burns and the alderman, also the Hon. Mike.

Muldoon was scared almost to death at the swaggering manner and big mouth of the Hon. Mike, and he followed that gentleman timidly into the refreshment bar.

The Hon. Mike ran the whole place right away.

He had all the waiters and the proprietor attending to his wants, to the exclusion of everybody else.

"I'm a prairie fire, and I want a doughnut!" he'd yell. "Yank me that cup of coffee, or I'll carve somebody up! Where in blazes is that mince pie? Good Heavens! have I got to kill somebody every place I go into?"

With such pleasant remarks and queries did he beguile time, and make it pleasant for all around him.

Next to him stood Muldoon and Dan.

Dan had chanced to pick up an old paper, which contained an account of a rifleman who had shot a card out of the hand of a friend at a distance of one hundred feet.

He had accomplished the feat, the paper said, fifty consecutive times.

Muldoon said he did not believe it.

"Faix, it couldn't be done," was his remark.

The Hon. Mike overheard it.

"What yer talkin' 'bout?" queried he.

Muldoon tremblingly told him.

"Don't yer believe it?" asked he.

"Faith, no."

"Why not?"

"It's impossible."

"Yer jist bet yer boots it ain't," responded the Hon. Mike. "I can do it myself. I'm a wild bear of the valley, and I kin shoot a fly off a mule's tail at half a mile distance."

Dan started to express a doubt relative to the remarkable piece of rifle-shooting, but Muldoon caught him by the arm.

"Dan—Dan," whispered he, "humor the devil. He is liable to kill us all. Begob, I wish I wur back in me boarding house. Devil a wild bear av the valley did we have around there!"

Meanwhile the Hon. Mike had swallowed his lunch, threatened to kill the waiter because he found a hair in his butter, and still had time to spare.

His mind reverted to the shooting episode, and he tackled Muldoon on the subject again.

"Bet yer a thousand dollars to a copper cent I can shoot a card out of anybody's hand. Kin shoot three bullets out of five chock into the card. Bet I can't?" interrogated he.



Muldoon said he didn't want to bet.

He was perfectly sure that the Hon. Mike could do whatever he undertook to do.

If the Hon. Mike said he could juggle icebergs with one hand, he (Muldoon) was just as convinced of the truth of the statement as if he had witnessed the icebergs being juggled.

"Ah, what are yer giving us?" queried Mr. Growler. "Save that 'ere iceberg taffy and feed it to the boys. Yer can't fool me—I'm a wicked wolf of the Wildwood an' I've lost my tail in a trap."

Muldoon shudderingly acquiesced, and started to go out with Dan, the rest of their party having already escaped.

But the Hon. Mike would not have it.

"Where yer going, yer terrier brothers?" he cried.

"To the cars," stammered Dan.

"The cars won't put up a cent for yer society. Come back here."

"But the train will start."

"The train won't start till I get ready. I've got my nigger in the locomotive cab with a pistol pointed at the engineer's head, and if he tries to start the old train he'll get his whole scalp blown off. So just yer toddle back here, yer Mulcahy twins."

The two obeyed.

The Hon. Mike dove one hand down into the side pocket of his velvet coat.

He produced a greasy and well-fingered pack of playing cards, which looked as if they had done good service in many a game of poker.

Scanning them carefully, he took out the cleanest one—and that was about as clean as the top of a load of coke.

Next, going on a small diving expedition with his hands into the hip-pocket of his pants, he drew forth a wicked-looking revolver.

He caressed it affectionately.

"See that 'ere shooter?" asked he.

"Yis," replied Muldoon, who could not very well help seeing it, as it was directly under his nose.

"See those 'ere cuts in its handle?"

"Yis."

"Them's corpses!"

"Corpses!" exclaimed Muldoon.

"Yes—they're dead men. Had to kill 'em because they were too fresh. They were white men, an' they all died game."

Muldoon shook with fear, but still he could not help noticing a series of dots on one side of the butt.

He summoned up sufficient courage to ask:

"What's thim?"

The Hon. Mike shrugged his shoulders with the air of a man who was conversing about trifles.

"Them's other corpses," he said, "but they were no account. Injuns, and Italians, and Chinese. Often when I get up in the morning, an' don't feel jest right, I wander out and shoot a couple of Chinese to get an appetite for breakfast."

Here he picked up the card, and gave it to Muldoon.

"Hold it!" ordered he.

Muldoon obeyed.

"Now get off about ten paces."

"What for?"

"Do as yer told. I ain't killed an Irishman for a week. Maybe it would change my luck if I did."

Muldoon promptly went the required distance.

"Hold up that card!" ordered the Hon. Mike, cocking his revolver.

"Why?"

"I'm going to shoot it out of yer hand!"

Muldoon gave vent to a howl of terror, while Dan dived under his coat for safety.

"Hold it steady!" commanded the Hon. Mike Growler. "I can generally hit that card three times out of five; the other two times I kill the man what holds it!"

## CHAPTER VII.

To say that Muldoon held that card with any degree of firmness would be a lie.

It wobbled around in his hand as if it had wings, and was trying to fly for the first time.

"Sa-ay!" roared the Hon. Mike; "why don't you hold that card steady? Have I got to leave a corpse in the shebang!"

"O'im t-tryin' to howld it steady," gasped Muldoon.

"Waal, I want yer to," remarked the Hon. Mike. "I'm a he-goat of the desert, and I kin buck the tar out of anybody I want to. Hold that ace steady, do yer hear? or there'll be weeping and yelling around to yer house. You'll be thar, but yer won't hear it."

Appalled at this awful remark it was with much hesitation that Muldoon ventured to ask:

"Where'll I be if yer miss the card?"

"It depends," returned the Hon. Mike, "how yer have lived. If yer've been to church regular, played a square game of poker, and always got ther drop on yer neighbor, besides takin' yer whisky straight, yer'll be an angel a flappin' out music on a golden harp. But if yer hain't, yer'll probably go to the other place, where all the clothing yer will need is a pair of socks!"

Of course, this reassured Muldoon.

The card got even more irregular in its movements than it was before, which was saying a good deal.

The Hon. Mike got out of patience. He pulled the trigger.

By some wonderful mischance, for, notwithstanding all of his blowing, he couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with a Krupp gun on ordinary occasions, the bullet sped through the card, taking the diamond pin clean out of its centre.

A round of applause ensued from the spectators, and at the same time the warning whistles of the locomotives sounded outside.

"I kin do it over again, but I don't want to keep the train waiting," said he. "Oh, I'm a katy-did in a locust tree, and yer kin hear me chirp across the continent!"

With which modest remark he put the card back among its fellows, replaced the revolver in his pocket, and swaggered to the cars.

Muldoon and Dan shook hands heartily.

"I wur niver so near heaven in me loife," was Muldoon's whispered comment.

"I wish I wur captain av a good band av thugs," said Dan. "Ye wud be aware av a mysterious murder around here some foine morning."

"I have me suspicions as to the personality av the murdered man," slyly said Muldoon.

"Who?"

"The Hon. Mike Growler."

They shook hands again.

"Be Heavens, I have assassin blood in me liver," declared Muldoon, "and he will wake it up soon. Thin let the sucker beware!"

They went into the cars.

The Hon. Mike was already there, occupying four seats, while his faithful negro servant was perched obediently upon the wood box, willing to eat the stove, or chuck himself out of the window, just as his master ordered.

The road for quite a while ran along a desert and dreary country, barren plains and long vistas of dreary rocks, and riding in the cars began to be a monotonous employment.

The Hon. Mike, at least, thought so.

He called to the brakeman:

"Sa-ay," drawled he, "where-is yer bloody old scenery?"

"Outside," replied the brakeman.

"Do yer call that scenery?" growled the Hon. Mike. "Where's yer waving forest? I'm a blind old horse-fly from a sand hill, and I want to see a waving forest."

"None about here, sir."

"No cataracts?"

"No, sir."

The Hon. Mike snorted in disgust.

"Why the deuce didn't yer run yer old railroad up in the North Pole?" asked he. "Then yer could gaze at icebergs, and get out and shoot Polar bears."

The brakeman subsequently replied that he had, personally, nothing to do with the route of the railroad. If he had he would have run it through some tropical jungle, where the passengers could eat bread fruit and occasionally shoot tigers.

His questioner was not satisfied, however.

"Got a piano on board?" queried he

"Nary one."

"Or a calliope?"

"No, sir."

"Or an air gun?"

"No."

"Howly Moses," bawled the Hon. Mike. "What can a fellow do? I'm a gay and festive shanghai rooster, and I want amusement. Anybody want to fight?"

Nobody did.

But Muldoon had a bright idea which he imagined would propitiate the Hon. Mike, and also beguile away the weary hours of travel.

"Suppose we aich wan sing a song, or make a speech?" he proposed.

"Now yer jest whistlin' at the bull's-eye," declared the Hon. Mike. "Somebody start the opera, and I'll jine in bime-by."

"Won't somebody plaze sing?" requested Muldoon.

There was a gay and romantic young widow occupying a corner



seat. She was just as gushing as gushing could be, and she tried to act as if she was just out of short dresses.

She simpered sweetly as Muldoon put the question.

"I can sing," said she.

"Yer a daisy," bluntly complimented the Hon. Mike. "Jest yer go on, an' if anybody interrupts, I'll cut their throats."

"Thanks," sweetly replied she, and opening her mouth till it looked like the entrance to a tunnel, she began:

"My grandfather's clock was too tall for the shelf,  
So it stood ninety years on the floor;  
It was taller by far——"

Notwithstanding the Hon. Mike's sanguinary threat, a chorus of cries arose from her hearers.

"Shoot it!"

"Where did you dig it up?"

"Take a tumble!"

"Put it on ice!"

"It's bald-headed!"

"It's so old it smells!"

Even the Hon. Mike drew out his pistol and cocked it.

"I hain't killed a woman in five years. Hev I got to do it now?" sighed he.

The widow stopped, in alarm.

"What's the matter?" queried she.

"If yez plaze, mum," informed Dan, "'Grandfather's Clock' busted years ago. It wur executed wid 'Baby Lee' and 'Nancy Mine.'"

"Oh!" spitefully she said; and she went and sat down alongside of the Hon. Mike.

"How unrefined the people are in this car," she said.

"Yes, mam—ignorant cusses," politely replied Mike.

"Have not a bit of sympathy in their souls."

"Nixey symph."

"You know what Mrs. Browning says about it. Don't you love Mrs. Browning?"

"The only girl I ever loved," replied the Hon. Mike, "wur Calico Sue down to Poker Flats. She could get away with more whisky than any woman I ever knew, and the way she could have five aces up in her sleeve, and hold four in her hand, was a sight to make an angel weep. Waal, she died—got kicked to death a-tryin' to carve her monnygram on the hind-quarters of old Spriggins' mule, and if she didn't scoot right up to Heaven I'm going to slide back on religion. Who was Mrs. Browning, anyhow?"

"Why—a poetess."

"What's that—a new sort of soap?"

The gushing widow looked at the Hon. Mike with melting eyes.

"A rough diamond," said she, trying to crush him with her eyes. "Oh, how I should love to have a soul like yours, sir, unscratched and untarnished by the social hypocrisies of fashionable life!"

This was more than Muldoon could stand.

"Oh, give me a bucket, till I throw up!" he gasped.

As for the Hon. Mike, he glared fiercely about, pulled up his velvet coat, and placed his arm upon the back of the seat behind the widow's back.

"Seems to me I've got a mash," declared he.

But he hadn't.

"I'll bet me hat to a gold watch that she gets out at Salt Lake City," remarked Dan, and a second ripple of mirth ensued, in which it is needless to say, the gushing widow did not join.

"I propose that the singing and recitations proceed," remarked a fat passenger, who sat away up front, and laughed at everything from a circus poster to a funeral.

But who was to speak next?

Everybody was diffident, and it seemed as if nobody wished to be the first to break the ice after the failure of the gushing widow.

At last the Hon. Mike got disgusted.

"Sa-ay!" put in he; "I'm a howling coyote from Leadville, and I want ter have some fun. If there ain't some soon, I'll bust up this hyar monotony with a murder!"

That was enough.

Hippocrates Burns arose.

His hair was all afloat, and the pale light of poetry shone in his falcon eye.

"I have an original poem called the 'Blood-drinker's Dream,' which I wud loike to recite."

Deep groans issued from the Muldoon party.

"Why wur I born?" queried Dan.

"Blow him up wid dynamite," said the alderman.

But the title evidently pleased the Hon. Mike. It was just mild and gentle enough to agree with his lamb-like tastes.

"Go ahead," cried he; "if those duffers don't like it, I'll set on 'em."

"Well," sadly sighed Muldoon, "I'll stay if the rest will." Thus encouraged, Hippocrates struck a most killing attitude. Waving his hand, he began:

"The blood-drinker sat on his rickety chair.

Tearing and tossing his wild, shaven hair,

And visions of spiders, and gigantic horse-flies,

Quivered and shivered and danced in his eyes."

"Be Heavens!" cried Muldoon, getting up in his seat. "I can stand it no longer. Hippocrates Burns, if ye don't sit down, I'll crawl down yer wind pipe and dance on yer lungs."

"Sa-ay," remarked the Hon. Mike, addressing the disconcerted poet, "is that all of it?"

"No," faltered Hippocrates.

"How much more?"

"Fifty-six verses."

"Pete," bawled the Hon. Mike to his colored man, "open my carpet-bag."

"Yes, sah."

"Take out a rope."

"Wha' fo', sir?"

"I'm going to hang the poet before he gets off the rest of the verses. One is all I want to hear. I ain't no hog."

Poor Hippocrates sat right down.

He didn't want to speak any more, and the non-success of two of their number seemed to dishearten the others, for no one else volunteered to amuse the company, and the idea was temporarily dropped.

On the train was a Græco-Roman wrestler, who rejoiced in the name of Rasp McCabe.

He was a great man.

In his own estimation.

Before he had been on board an hour everybody knew what he was going to do, who he was and all about his fifty-seven fights with fifty-seven unknown wrestlers.

In fact, he was a bigger nuisance, if possible, than the Hon. Mike, for he had an agreeable way of getting about half full of whisky, and parading through the car with the remark:

"My names' Rasp McCabe, an' I can wrestle wid a she-bear. I can chuck anybody in this car over my head!"

As a rule, nuisances—social, living nuisances we mean—dislike each other.

The Hon. Mike and Rasp McCabe were no exceptions.

The Hon. Mike detested Rasp, and Rasp detested the Hon. Mike.

But secretly they were afraid of each other, and consequently manifested no open hostility.

At last, when but a few hours' distance from Omaha, the Hon. Mike struck a big idea by which he thought he would get square upon Rasp.

He called Muldoon over to him.

Muldoon obeyed humbly.

"Yer know that big duffer of a Rasp McCabe, the snide wrestler?" began Mike.

"Yis."

"He's been giving me back-slack about yer."

"Phwat did he say?"

"He said yer was no good. That yer were a big-mouthed terrier and yer orter be down in the sewer eatin' rats."

Muldoon got very excited at this aspersion.

"Begob, he shud be up on a scaffold wid a rope around his neck if the divil had his dues," was his answer.

"He also said something about yer wife," continued the Hon. Mike.

"He did?"

"I'm telling yer, ain't I?"

"What wur it?"

"He said she looked as if she'd just got out of the monkeys' cage at a menagerie, and he never knew before that baboons could speak."

"I'd like to break his jaw," gasped Muldoon, clenching his fist. "Wait till I get him blind drunk. Bedad, I'll have some fun wid him, I'll smash his head wid a club."

The Hon. Mike molded his voice into a confidential tone.

"Don't do it," said he.

"Why?"

"I'm yer friend, understand. I'm a whooping lump of glue from 'Frisco, and I'm a sticker. I never go back on my friends, and I never shot a man that I didn't bury."

"What av that?"

"I've got a big idea. I'll see you get even with Rasp McCabe."

"How?"

"Keep it dark. You've got a neat pair of legs."

"Faix, the girls always said they were purty."

"Yer've got square shoulders like an ox."



"Perhaps. I'll not give ye the black loi."

"An' I'll bet a gold eagle that you're a grizzly bear on the wrestle."

"Troth, I used to be. It was meself that chucked Mike Mulcahy, the best wrestler in all Armagh, over me shoulder, and broke his leg."

"Just what I thought. Now I'll tell you what I'm drawing out. You've got to wrestle with Rasp McCabe."

If the Hon. Mike had proposed Muldoon's instant execution, the Solid Man couldn't have been more alarmed.

"Ye are a maniac," said he; "why, the big brute could pitch me out av the windy. It is not a professional I am!"

"I can't help it," was the Hon. Mike's reply. "You've got to break the blower all up. You kin do it, an' you've got to do it. If yer don't, I'll kill yer! I'm a happy-go-lucky son of a gambolier, but yer don't want to cross me. I'm wuss nor a mule with his tail cut off when I get crossed."

Muldoon had a bright gleam of hope.

"Where'l we wrestle?" he asked; "we can't do it in the car, and they won't stop the train for us to do it on the prairie."

"Ah, I'll fix that," was the other's reply. "We'll stop over for a day at Omaha. 'We'll hire a hall, an' hev it a creamy, high-toned affair. Ginerally speaking, I'm a yelling old yaller dorg; but I kin be ice cream an' oysters whin I gits into s'ciety."

In vain Muldoon tried to beg off. Mike wouldn't have it.

He went right away to McCabe, and stated that Muldoon was willing—aye, crazy, to wrestle him at Omaha for five hundred dollars.

The McCabe was fairly paralyzed at this piece of audacity.

"What!" he howled; "he wrestle me, Rasp McCabe, the boss wrestler of the world, who's been in one hundred and fourteen matches, and won one? Oh, go talk to him gently. Tell him he better pitch himself out of the window; it'll be an easier death. He must be crazy."

"Crazy!" repeated the Hon. Mike; "not much. He says you are a big-footed sucker—that yer can't wrestle with a sick grasshopper, an' that yer are all blow and N. G., anyhow."

"He said that?" thundered Rasp.

"Yer bet."

Rasp went through a pantomime illustrative of blood, murder and mutilation.

"Now I won't spare him," he bawled. "I'll make an Irish funeral, for I'll break him all to bits. Jist tell him to leave money enough to buy that old crow of his mourning."

The Hon. Mike carried the message to Muldoon with various additions of his own, which did great honor to his imagination.

He got Muldoon into a fury.

"Bridget," said he, "what do you suppose the dizzy wrestler called yer?"

She didn't know.

"An ould crow."

"And," also put in the Hon. Mike, "he said you were a fagot, and if he owned such a wife as you, he'd soak her in kerosene and make fireworks out of her for the Fourth of July."

Then Mrs. Muldoon was mad.

"Terrence," she said to her husband, "if ye had a spark of manhood in ye ye would go back to the smoking car and kick all av the sucker's front teeth out."

"I'm going to do better than that."

"What?"

"I'm going to wrestle with him."

"If yez don't lick him, I'll get a divorce," was Mrs. Muldoon's cheering words. "Rayvenge yer wife's honor, Terrence, if ye are a rale Irishman."

When the train arrived at Omaha almost everybody upon the cars was aware that Muldoon intended to struggle with Rasp McCabe.

A great many intended to stay over till next day and witness the contest.

The Hon. Mike was as busy as a flea on a strange dog's back.

He had a hall hired in half an hour, for that evening.

He had posters announcing the event printed and plastered up all over town in the quickest time on record, and also hired a brass band.

It wasn't an artistic band—or it wasn't a band that could equal Gilmore's or Sousa's—but it was a band that could play the roof off a boiler factory, and that was just what Mike wanted.

"Durn yer symphonies—dod-rot yer classic music," were his words; "give me a band that kin bust the drum of a feller's ears. That is what I'm putting my pile on!"

At last evening arrived.

Muldoon was in a tremor and Dan in despair, for he never expected to see his brother emerge from the encounter alive.

Rasp McCabe was triumphant.

He strutted around behind the scenes at the hall like an overgrown rooster, and told everybody who would listen to him how

he was going to break the stage with Muldoon, just as soon as he got a grip on him.

Meanwhile the Hon. Mike had got Muldoon into ring costume, and braced him up with a couple of ponies of good old brandy, which put new life into him.

"I've bet my pile onto yer," said the Hon. Mike, "an' yer've got to win. It's the two best falls out of three, shoulders to touch the stage; and even if he does chuck yer at fust, lay for him. Yer can down him. I know it. If yer don't" (here Mike touched his pistol pocket significantly), "that 'ere costume will be yer grave clothes!"

Here the band stopped playing, and the wrestlers marched out upon the stage.

The hall was literally crowded, and the sight of the vast sea of faces made Muldoon feel more nervous than ever.

But upon his appearance a universal chorus of greetings arose from the audience. They all knew him by reputation.

"Bully for Muldoon!"

"Hoopee for the Solid Man!"

"'Rah for the boarding house!"

"Three cheers for the terrier!"

Such were a few of the exclamations, and Muldoon braced right up again.

"Begob, byes!" he said, with a knowing wink, "watch me!"

He advanced and shook hands with Rasp.

"Ready!" called the umpire, an old sportsman, while the Hon. Mike put his hands into his pockets, and whispered to Muldoon to "go in!"

Before Muldoon could get a fair grasp at Rasp, Rasp seized him by the hips and threw him pellmell off the stage.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Down in the orchestra was a bald-headed German playing the drum.

It was a big drum—a drum which sounded loudly as well—and the German was playing it for all it was worth.

His whole heart was in his work, and he didn't know or didn't care what the wrestlers were doing, as long as his drum could be heard. They might be standing upon their heads or swallowing cannon, for all he knew; but he was bound upon one thing—that drum wasn't going to be left in the music if he knew it, and he guessed he did.

Accordingly, he was pounding away as if his life depended upon it, when suddenly he saw the leader of the orchestra duck his head and give vent to the warning cry:

"Look oud!"

The bald-headed bass-drummer did look out.

That is to say, he looked up.

The next second a flying mass obscured his vision of the stage, he felt himself knocked forcibly backward, and there was a loud report, as if some vast bladder had blown up.

"Mein Gott!" bawled he, "vot vos it—oh, vot vos it?"

A voice was audible in reply from the floor.

A voice which sounded discouraged and mad:

a voice half-stifled and choked with dust and disgust.

"Take the domned thing off av me head!" roared the voice, "or I'll butcher all av ye fiddlers."

The bass-drummer looked down.

His cherished musical instrument was upon the floor.

But it was not alone.

It was tenanted.

There was a big hole in one end, and from that end protruded the body, legs and feet of a man. His head and neck were inside of the drum.

Needless to say, the man was Muldoon.

Upon leaving the stage he had fallen kerflap into the orchestra, and took a flying leap into the drum.

"Get out of dot drum!" shrieked the drummer. "Ach, Himmel—it vos ruined!"

"Ain't I thryin' to get out?" returned Muldoon, in muffled accents. "Ye don't think I'm doing this for fun, do yez?"

"You vos got no pizness mit der drum."

"Be Heavens, I don't want none! Pull me out, ye Italian count."

The drummer seemed to comprehend for the first time that Muldoon hadn't gone and got into the drum purposely or out of a spirit of mischief.

Aided by the flute player and the leader of the orchestra, he succeeded in dragging Muldoon from his accidental refuge.

But the bass-drum was spoiled.

There was a large hole in its head.

No more would its martial notes be heard among the sweet strains which arose from that sheet-iron orchestra.



The heart of the bass-drummer swelled with woe as he gazed at the casualty which had happened to his favorite instrument.

"By dunder!" said he to Muldoon, "you do dot again, und, by tam! I put one—dwo—dree heads mit you!"

Muldoon's answer was characteristic.

He got up, shook himself, and looked at the fiery little drummer.

"Bring me a barrel of brine," ordered he.

"What for?" asked the astonished leader of the band.

"I want to pickle that drummer!"

"Why?"

"He wur too fresh!"

A dozen of the audience who were sitting near heard the remark, and a round of laughter was the result.

This encouraged Muldoon, and with a smiling face he clambered upon the stage.

"Excuse me," he said, with a bow to the spectators, "I jist wint down to rayorganize the music!"

The whole building shook with applause, and Muldoon spit upon his hands.

Turning to the umpire, he said:

"Ye can call that no fall. Divil a bit did I strike on me shoulders; it wur me head!"

Meanwhile Rasp McCabe had been strutting around that stage as if he owned all of the United States, and was going to buy South America next week.

"Did yer see me chuck the terrier?" asked he. "Did yer get onto me fire him? If I wanted to, I could have bounced him up through the roof. But I was only playing with him. Next time I'll break the door with him!"

The Hon. Mike put his hands into his pockets, and puffed on his cigar.

"There's an old proverb which will just suit yer case," replied he. "I'm an old ground mole, and I wear spectacles, but I kin see sometimes."

"What's yer proverb?" asked Rasp, who, to tell the truth, didn't know what a proverb meant. Indeed, if somebody had said it was a hair-dye Rasp could not have sworn that it wasn't.

"The proverb," slowly enunciated the Hon. Mike, as he ejected a blue, vaporous cloud of tobacco smoke, "is this: 'The rooster what crows loudest allers gets his head chopped off first!'"

"Ah, blazes!" was Rasp's mild retort. "Jest set up yer old nine-pin, an' see me knock him down. It's a pity he ain't got a twin—I'd wrestle the both of them, an' start a double-headed funeral!"

"One of the breed will be enough," calmly answered Mike, turning on his heel.

"Time!" called the umpire.

Muldoon advanced to the scratch, game as a two-year-old colt.

Rasp met him, confident of an easy victory.

"Oh, this is a pudding," he exclaimed, as he closed with his opponent; "this is a clam-roast—it is a——"

Just here he stopped.

He did not make any more remarks just then.

To his intense surprise, Muldoon, by a skillful twist of his leg and a dexterous push, bent him fairly backward, and before the confounded Rasp could realize what was going on, despite his vigorous defense, Muldoon placed the great wrestler upon his back on the stage, his shoulders and hips fairly touching the boards.

"Fair fall!" decided the umpire, and the house rang with applause.

The Hon. Mike executed a sort of impromptu scalp dance out of sheer joy.

"Whoop!" yelled he, as Rasp arose from the stage. "What did I tell yer? Don't yer wish there was triplets in the family so yer could wrestle 'em? Yer a nice old wrestler, yer are. We'll get up a purse and buy yer a leather medal wid yer monnygram, 'N. G.', on one side!"

"I let him do it," growled Rasp, brushing the dirt from his costume.

"In yer mind," retorted Mike; "jest let him do it again. I'm a one-legged grasshopper from Cohoes, but I've got my pile onto the right man, and don't yer forgit it!"

Rasp made no direct reply.

But from the way he buckled his belt and rubbed his hands it was evident he meant to do his best.

"Play him carefully," was the Hon. Mike's warning to Muldoon.

"Time!" was the umpire's remark, just at this juncture.

Both men advanced warily.

Each had had a taste of the other's quality, and careful wrestling was the result for the next quarter of an hour.

Arms and legs were intertwined in various locks, which seemed impossible of unentanglement; bodies twisted and writhed in various contortions, which fairly rivaled that of a serpent; heads were bent and turned until the vertebrae of the neck seemed to have the dislocated, yet neither of the combatants appeared to have the slightest advantage of the other.

In fact, it was the finest of all physical struggles—a wrestle between two well-matched and determined-to-win men.

It went on for over half an hour.

Then the spectators began to growl.

They feared that it was what has become too common in our American sporting circles—a put-up job, or, in other words, a "draw match."

Shouts arose on all sides, directed impartially to either wrestler.

"End it!"

"Throw him!"

"No funny business!"

"We don't want any draw business!"

"Pitch him over your head!"

"Fire him into the scenery!"

"Put up a wooden umpire!"

"Somebody win, or we'll lynch the both of you!"

"We can't stay here all night!"

"Do something, or we'll take a hand in it ourselves!"

"Yes; and we'll take a rope in, too!"

The wrestlers heard the ominous remarks.

They realized that a western crowd is not to be fooled with—not for a cent.

Accordingly they redoubled their efforts.

Rasp might have thrown Muldoon.

Indeed, we have half an idea that, had not chance favored our hero he might have done so, for being unused to protracted struggles, Muldoon was being worn out.

Yet chance did favor our hero.

At a critical moment Rasp lost his foothold and slipped.

"There's yer chance!" cried the Hon. Mike.

Muldoon grasped it.

Exerting his strength to its utmost, in a second Rasp lay helpless and breathing heavily upon his back.

"Two falls for Muldoon!" announced the umpire. "Mr. Muldoon wins the match."

It was so.

The contest was over, and Muldoon was the victor, and winner of the five hundred dollars.

The shout which arose from the audience caused the whole building fairly to shake. Such a genuine outburst of enthusiasm it would be hard to equal.

Amid the enthusiastic plaudits, Muldoon made his bow, and retired to his dressing room.

As for Rasp, he picked himself up a humbler, if not wiser man. Where he went to nobody seemed to know. Anyhow, it was certain that he was seen no more by the party whose adventures we chronicle.

The Hon. Mike also disappeared.

At midnight Muldoon was awakened by a tap at the door of the hotel in which he was stopping.

"What is it?" asked he.

"Get up and dress," was the reply, in a strange voice.

"What for?"

"You're wanted."

"Who wants me?"

"There's a terror down the street blind drunk. He's yelling and screeching, and he's got two big pistols. He says he's a bald-headed old grizzly bear, and he's going to set fire to the town for fun. He says he knows you, and wants you to come out till he burns you up with the jail. Come right out."

Muldoon got up with a sigh.

The "terror" referred to must certainly be the Hon. Mike, elated over the success of the wrestling match.

Dressing himself hurriedly he opened the door and found a pale-faced man, who was fairly shaking with fright.

"Do come out and pacify him," begged the pale-faced man. "He's awful. He's half-murdered a Chinaman, upset every ash barrel in the street, and he raced me half a mile with a bowie knife, because he said he was going to be a bloody pirate, and he wanted a skull to put onto his flag!"

With a groan Muldoon went down into the street.

Howls and yells and wild hurrahs made the Hon. Mike's presence known right away.

He was in the middle of the roadway with a pine torch, got the Lord knows where, in one hand, and his biggest revolver in the other.

In front of him was a fat, perspiring German, with his coat and vest off, while surrounding the two was a large and select crowd of riff-rafs and vagabonds.

From half a dozen eager informants, Muldoon soon gleaned the fact that the Hon. Mike was laboring under a hallucination that the respectable Teuton was a canary bird. Or, at least, the Hon. Mike persisted in declaring that he was, which really amounted to the same thing.

Therefore, the Hon. Mike had made the poor fellow take off his



coat and vest under the force of a pistol and the unanswerable argument that canary birds never wore coats or vests.

"Hello, Muldoon," roared the Hon. Mike. "How yer was? I'm a hooting old screech-owl from the Yosemite, and I'm out on a tare. Got a cage?"

"For what?"

"To put my canary bird in. I'm going to take him home to my gal."

"Where is yer birrud?"

The Hon. Mike pointed to the Dutchman.

"There," said he. "Wait till you hear him warble."

"Mein Gott!" declared the Dutchman, "I vos not a kenairy baird; I vos a respectable goot citizen."

"Don't give me none of yer back talk," ordered the Hon. Mike; "sing!" and the muzzle of his revolver flashed in close proximity to the other's head.

Half frantic, the German began:

"Where, oh, where vos mine leetle tog gone?"

Oh, where—oh, where vos he be?

Mit his tail cut off behind his ears;

Oh, where—oh, where vos he be?"

"That's bully!" commented the Hon. Mike. "It's real cream. Oh, you're a boss old canary bird, an' I'm goin' to get your picter painted. Any galoot in this crowd got a little ladder?"

Several gentlemen looked into their pockets, and one man gazed carefully into hat, but no little ladder could be found.

"What do yez want av a little ladder?" queried Muldoon.

"I'm a big-footed old spider-crab, and I don't want to live unless I kin hev a trick canary," was the Hon. Mike's retort. "I'm going to teach him tricks—going to teach him to walk up a little ladder, and stand on his head."

"Oh, Himmel!" groaned the Dutchman. "If any von vos got a leetle ladder please to preak it. Vy vos I not borned dead?"

"Cos yer wasn't," was the Hon. Mike's philosophic reply. "Dance, birdie, dance."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"Jiminy gracious, I never vos learned. Yu dinks I vos a spieler?"

"I don't care if you was a Turk. You've got to dance or there'll be a dead canary bird 'round here."

"Maybe," continued the Hon. Mike, reflectively, "it would be a good plan to kill him. Then I could get him stuffed and he'd look derned pretty on the mantel-shelf."

That was enough for the Dutchman.

"Please!" cried he, "I vill dance—I vill turn a summersault—I vill varble like a kenery baird. Only don't shoot—I vos got a vife sick mit der consumption."

"Serves yer right for gettin' married. Now go ahead and dance, yer German dandy—give us a waltz quadrille, wid society touches!"

His victim started to obey. He was just putting in some great work when there was a sudden commotion upon the edge of the crowd.

Cries arose of:

"Push the old gal forward!"

"Give her a front seat!"

"Make way for the fat woman!"

"Give the baby a show!"

"Oh, ain't she a daisy! She wants a private box!"

Heralded by these complimentary remarks, or uncomplimentary (just as you please) remarks, a fat woman—very fat and very muscular, forced her way into the ring wherein the involuntary dancer was exhibiting his Terpsichorean abilities.

"Hans Hoakelbury!" cried she.

The dancer stopped.

"Donder!" exclaimed he; "it vos Gretchen!"

"I don't care if it was Bedalia," said the Hon. Mike; "go ahead wid the schottische. I am going to a dead men's ball to-night, and I want to learn the steps!"

Disregarding his words, the woman proceeded to grab the Dutchman by the arm.

"Hans, you pig-headed donkey!" roared she, "vy vos you oud here mit der street, making ein jackass out mit yerself? You vos drunk again, und you bromised me last Saterdag when you coom home poiling drunk und slept all night mit der refrigerator dat you would nefer do so some mores. You vos a nice husband—vosn't you!"

"You dink I vos doing dis for fun?" gasped Hans.

"Vot for, den?"

"I couldn't help id."

"Vy not?"

"Dot lunatic mit der pistol says dot I vos a kenery baird, und I must dance."

"He's right, old gal," put in the Hon. Mike. "Just yer go freeze yerself somewhere, and I'll come around and kiss the ice off

yer by and by. We can get along widout yer chin-music. I'm a bawling old screech-owl from Pike's Peak, and I'm a-runnin' this hyar circus to suit myself!"

If there ever was a mad woman placed upon the face of the earth, it was the worthy Gretchen just then.

She did not understand more than half of what Mike said, but that half was enough to get her wild.

"I vos a decent married voman," she vociferated, "and I lets no big loafers kiss me. Took dot, you Irish image!"

With her words she fetched the Hon. Mike a slap alongside of the mouth which made his teeth rattle.

She followed up her initial attack with a shower of blows, rained indiscriminately, but vigorously, upon every part of the Hon. Mike's person.

Muldoon says it was the quickest fight he ever saw.

Inside of two minutes Hans and Gretchen were gone, the crowd had fled precipitately, and the Hon. Mike lay upon his back in the gutter.

Muldoon assisted him to arise.

He was dejected and humble. The fight was all out of him, and he was almost sobered off.

"Do yez fale loike setting foire to the town now?" mischievously asked Muldoon.

"I'm a smelt wid its head cut off. I'm a paralyzed locust," he sadly said. "Licked—laid out—and all broke up by a woman. Will somebody bust my head in wid a rock?"

"Come in and go to bed," advised Muldoon. "Ye will feel better in the morning."

"Mebbe," replied the terror, and he allowed himself to be marched into the hotel and up to his room as peaceably as a child.

But he could not get over the prowess displayed by Gretchen.

"Why is that air woman married?" he asked; "why ain't she an old maid, or a blooming widder. If her and me was married we'd make a team wot would clean out the world. Don't yer forget it; paste it in your hat!"

And even the next day, when the whole party were on the cars and whirling over the plains, he could not drive her from his mind.

"I'm liable to go back to Omaha and kill that weepin' willer of a husband of hers," he confided to Muldoon. "I'm D. M., dead mashed onto her;" and with that he heaved a deep sigh, and did not recover his usual flow of spirits until he had pitched the newsboy's hat out of the window and kicked his newspapers out of the door.

Now, it is a well-known fact that accidents will occur on well-regulated railroads as well as in well-regulated families.

Therefore it was not very much of a surprise when about noon the engine broke down.

A pause of some three or four hours was thereby necessitated till a new engine could be telegraphed for from Omaha.

It grew tiresome sitting in the cars.

"Bedad," murmured Muldoon, "I am all av a cramp. Let us go out and view the scenery and inhale the azone av the valleys."

Dan volunteered to go.

So did the Hon. Mike.

And likewise Muldoon's Chinese servant, St. Patrick.

"Me bellee much tiled of caree," he pathetically said; "gottee belly fule of lide; me go with possee."

"All right," answered Muldoon, "come along. Bedad, if I find an eligible site I'll start a tay warehouse and place yez outside on a block for a sign."

So the four started off.

Striking west from the railroad track, they soon reached a flourishing farm.

Proceeding across a plowed field, they came to the barn yard.

Dan peeped over the fence.

"Howly Moses!" he cried; "the yard is full av aigles!"

Muldoon looked.

"Be Heavens, Dan," gasped he, "me blood pallors in me cheek for yer ignorance. Aigles! why, they're geese!"

It was so.

Dan's eagles were geese!

And a promising flock of geese they were too, led by an old gander, who evidently thought he was just about too sweet to live.

The Hon. Mike had a happy idea.

"I'm a wall-eyed kidnapper, and I'm going to kidnap a goose," said he.

"I'm going ter take it back to the cars and mash some gal wid it!"

Accordingly, followed by his friends, he clambered over the fence and started to nail the gander.

The whole flock flew to their leader's aid, and made a vigorous attack in his defense.

Muldoon sought safety in a barrel, when one goose grasped his nose and another his coat tails; the gander grabbed the Chinese by his pigtail; the Hon. Mike put up his umbrella as a shield, while Dan took to his heels.



## CHAPTER IX.

Muldoon was in a nice fix.

One goose had hold of his coat tail, and was vainly trying to fly away with both Muldoon and the barrel, while the other one was picking at his nose. He took it, as Dan afterward said, for a beet, probably, owing to its redness.

"Get a slung-shot," yelled he, "and shoot the berruds. Dan, if yez are a man don't run away, but rescue yez brother."

Dan did not respond.

He believed that discretion was the better part of valor—especially with geese.

He fled till he reached a fence, upon which he perched, breathless with his exertions.

"Begob, I niver wur in sich danger in me loife," gasped he; "I wondher did the gayse take us for something good to eat? Mother av Moses, wud yez gaze at the tay sign!"

Truly Dan was right.

St. Patrick, the heathen Chinees of Muldoon's, was verily a sight to gaze upon.

An old reprobate of a goose had grabbed his pig-tail, and from all appearance was doing its best to step him heavenward.

St. Patrick did not want to go, however. Earth was good enough for him.

He twisted and danced and writhed around as if he had boils upon his feet.

"Hellee damee!" shrieked he, "goose bellee muchee dam bad. Bleakee poor Chinaman all lup. Masler Muldoon, helpee St. Patrick."

"Do I luk loike a man who could help anybody?" roared Muldoon. Bite yer pigtail off, ye picthur for a three-cint fan, and fool the goose."

As biting the back of your head with your mouth is a feat never as yet successfully accomplished, St. Patrick did not profit by the advice of his master.

Instead, he yelled and howled and delivered a choice volley of Chinese oaths, which must have completely paralyzed his feathered opponent, for with a hoarse cackle the goose flew off in a dazed sort of way.

St. Patrick's first act was to get down upon his knees.

Muldoon noticed the action, for the goose which had been picking at his nose had flown off in disgust.

"Phwat are yez at now?" he yelled.

"Prayee," said St. Patrick.

"Who to?"

"Joss."

"Who's he?"

"Goddee of Chinaman."

"Be Heavens, yez will pray standing, then!" declared Muldoon, "or take off yer pants. Begorra, I paid siven dollars for those pants, and divil a bit will I have the knees creased. Whirra—whirra! the idolatry av the haythen is pernicious to morality!"

Meanwhile the Hon. Mike was making a brilliant fight with his umbrella against a perfect cohort of winged enemies.

"Whoop!" he was yelling, "lick me; will yer, yer yaller-bellied slouches. Lions and tigers—I'm a limping old jackass from the mud banks, but I'm good for a cart load of geese. I was the first man in Nevada. I was the first man to scalp ten Injuns at once. I'm an old blue whale, and I can swaller an iceberg! Do yer think yer can drown me? Oh, I guess not. Take that, ye red-legged pirate!"

With which gentle remark he socked the old gander alongside of the head with his umbrella, felling him to the ground.

The fall of their leader frightened the rest of the birds.

There was a whirr of wings and a chorus of harsh, discordant cackles, and off they flew.

As for Mike, he seized the old gander by the throat.

Taking out his bowie knife, he cut its throat.

"See that its grave's kept green," he remarked.

"Begob, I will," answered Muldoon, emerging from his barrel, "I'll plant Dan into it."

By this time Dan concluded it was safe to get off the fence and approach his friends.

He was received with scoffs and sneers and libelous remarks.

"The government should discharge the regular army and hire Dan," remarked Muldoon; "it is a brave bye he is—a credit to his cradle. Run from a goose, ye daring laddy-buck—I believe ye wud cry for quarther from a mosquito."

"What did you do yerself?" asked Dan, in self-defense.

"Troth, I blinded five geese with tobacco juice, and kicked the bosoms out of three more."

"But ye hid in a barrel."

"It was me masterly head that caused me to."

"How?"

"I had a great schame."

"What was it?"

"I intended to conceal meself in a barrel till the geese lit on the ground within raych. Thin I wud extend me hand, grasp the whole flock by the feet and make 'em prisoners. Dan, ye may live till ye are put into the museum as a mummy, but ye will never possess the great head av yer brother!"

Dan sulked and said he did not want to. If he thought there was the possibility of such a catastrophe, he would immediately roam out upon the prairie and become a bloody Indian.

As for the Hon. Mike, he picked his teeth with his bowie knife, and said nobody had done anything but himself. He was the cross-eyed goat of the burning volcano, and he had gained the victory.

And as the Hon. Mike said this very fiercely, and played most ferociously with his bowie knife and his teeth, the caucus came to an unanimous conclusion that to him was all the glory of the conquest due.

At a short distance from the barnyard was visible a frame house, to which the barnyard doubtlessly belonged.

"Let's go call," suggested Dan.

"All right," said the Hon. Mike; "we might strike a square meal."

"Mightee gettee ice cleam and cake," remarked St. Patrick.

"Ice cream and cake!" groaned Muldoon. "Would ye hearken to the gluttony av the mahogany face. It's a wondher he don't want quail on toast and lemonade. Arrah, but it's very high-toned he's getting. I'll be afther expecting him to be doing his hair up in curl paper, and bathing in Florida water nixt. Ye will be lucky if yez get Romeo and Juliet, ye Mongolian slave."

"Whattee Mulloon say?"

"Romeo and Juliet."

"Whattee that?"

"Pork and beans."

"Porkee beanee velly good," philosophically answered St. Patrick. "Not goodee velly muchee, though, as flied bow-wow."

Muldoon groaned.

"Don't mind the moon-eyed leper," advised the Hon. Mike; "on the average I kin kill sixty Chinese a day; yet I don't mind 'em. I'm a prairie fire, and I kin burn up a mountain; yet I never mind 'em. Let's come brace the old ranch, and see who owns it."

Accordingly the four approached the house—St. Patrick, with his usual bland and child-like smile hovering upon his lips, not a whit vexed at the reproof he had received.

It was not an inviting house.

It was a half-painted and grim mansion, with more of the general appearance of a jail than the habitation of a happy family.

"It reminds me av a mausoleum!" remarked Muldoon.

"Is it a baste?" asked Dan.

"What?"

"A mausoleum?"

"I see I must adapt me language to yer diminutive intellect," groaned Muldoon. "A mausoleum is a place where they bury dead men. Do yez interpret?"

Dan said he did.

And he approached the house.

As he did so, three windows, which had previously been closed, flew open.

In one appeared a tall, lean, hickory-knot-faced woman, whose appearance was enough to scare a circus poster off a dead wall. In her hand she grasped a rusty gun.

At the second window was a younger image of her, with a big horse pistol.

From a third window protruded the head of a white-haired, crushed-looking man, thin as a rail, and with a nose as sharp as a razor.

He was also armed.

In one hand he held a cavalry carbine, and in the other a big carving knife. Indeed, the man was so diminutive that he was almost dwarfed by his weapons.

"Luk at the beauty show!" yelled Muldoon.

"I belave we have struck a fort," replied Dan.

"Saay!" said the Hon. Mike, advancing toward the house, "we want——"

"Yeou want to git right eout," interrupted the hickory-knot-faced woman, as she pointed the rusty gun at his head; "I know you."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Who am I?"

"A tramp, and I'm deown on tramps. Thar's may darter Julia, and that mean-spirited man with the carbine is my husband. We're all deown on tramps. To tell the truth, stranger, bein' deown on tramps is born in our family ever since a tramp stole our hen house."

"But, Little Buttercup——" again began Mike.

She would not take any taffy.



She replied that Mike was a tramp of the worst sort, and she was sure of it.

He might call her a churn of sweet milk, and say that her face was a garden of flowers, but it would not alter her opinion of him.

Even if he should put a diamond necklace upon the point of an arrow, and shoot it to her through the window, she would still regard him as a tramp.

"I know you are a tramp," she finished with.

"Why?"

"Because you tried to steal my geese."

At this period of the dialogue Muldoon took a place in the conversation.

"Yez are mistaken, madam," said he; "we did not thry to stale the gayse. Be Heavens, the gayse thried to stale us!"

"If yeow don't take that lunatic away, I'll shute him," said she, ignoring Muldoon, and addressing the Hon. Mike. "Being deown on lunatics is also born in our family."

The four held a consultation.

St. Patrick stepped forward.

He addressed himself to the fairy with the horse pistol.

"Sweetee flower of western wilds," began he, "poor St. Paltrick allee bloke up for you. Deadee in love his heart——"

"Git eout, yeow dirty reptile!" responded the object of his addresses, pulling the trigger of her firearm.

There was a loud report.

A bullet whistled past St. Patrick—not too close, but just close enough to make him jump as if he had been prodded in the back with a harpoon.

"It's a foine masher ye are!" sarcastically commented Muldoon. "Ye should have yer mustache banged, and go gargle yez fate wid bay rum. Bedad, yez couldn't mash a stone woman—lest yez did it wid a trip-hammer."

St. Patrick looked disgusted.

Equally so did the Hon. Mike.

"Boyees," said he, shaking his fist at the hickory-faced woman, "if we wait to get something to chaw on out of that old stockade, we'll wait till we die. It's N. G.—no grub."

Muldoon sorrowfully declared that he thought so, too.

Also Dan.

Ditto St. Patrick.

"We muchee heap bettee go back to tlain," said he, "eatee flight car!"

"For wanst the decalcomanie spakes roight," said Muldoon. "Let the bushwhackers retrogade."

They did so.

Half an hour later found them at the railroad

Time had passed more swiftly than they had calculated upon, and the new engine had arrived from Omaha, and been in readiness for some twenty minutes.

Their absence was all that had delayed the train.

"Did you think that we could wait all night?" impatiently queried the conductor. "Did you think this was a canal boat?"

The Hon. Mike said he didn't care if he thought it was a canal boat, or a slave ship, or a Chinese junk. It wasn't the conductor's business, anyhow, and if the conductor didn't keep his mouth shut he was liable to have no mouth at all, for the Hon. Mike, felt in a humor to cut the said mouth completely out.

The Hon. Mike settled himself in the car in his usual pleasant manner—that is to say, he proceeded to occupy two whole seats—resting on one and putting his feet on the other.

Presently the car door opened.

A queer, ghastly-looking figure appeared in the doorway.

It was a man.

But a man who looked more like a ghost or a gnome than the presentment of real flesh and blood.

His face was pale and ghastly, and as colorless as chalk.

His body was as thin and attenuated as a bean pole.

He had a dry, husky cough, was dressed in a faded old suit, and moved down the aisles on crutches with great apparent difficulty.

"Howly St. Peter!" exclaimed Muldoon, as he caught sight of him. "it is resurrection day, and he is the first man up."

"Horrible!" exclaimed pretty Miss Mary Ann, as she shut her eyes and looked the other way.

"Ye gods, he reminds me of a disembodied spirit!" remarked Hippocrates Burns. "By the way, I've got a poem I wrote about a disembodied spirit; shall I recite it?"

The alderman, who had been dozing, with a big bandana handkerchief slung over his head, awoke at the bare suggestion.

"If ye do," said he, "it will be me or ye go out av the windy."

"Nobody will ever give me a show," grumbled Hippocrates, and he sank back into his seat, crushed again, while the ghostly passenger proceeded to glide down the aisle.

He looked around him for a seat.

The two occupied by the Hon. Mike attracted his notice.

Without a word he lifted Mike's feet off one.

Mr. Growler could not have been more surprised if a whale had fallen in through the stove-pipe.

"Saay, yer bloody old dead man!" yelled he, "those are my feet."

"I know it," was the scarce audible reply.

"What did you touch 'em for?"

"I want that seat."

"Yer'll have ter want it—want it bad before ye get it. Do yer know me?"

"Yes."

"Who am I?"

"A big, hulking loafer!"

The Hon. Mike looked so wild and jumped about so fiercely at this insult, that the fat passenger got up from his seat by the stove and pleaded with him to spare the old man's life.

The old man pushed the fat passenger away.

"Don't mind the rowdy," he said. "He'll come home soon; he's only got the jumping-jacks."

Right here the unlucky Muldoon thought he saw a good chance to cover himself with glory and gain a hero's name with the rest of the passengers.

Surely, the aged passenger was a pugilistic pudding!

Why, he looked as if a good gust of wind would blow him all to pieces.

So thought Muldoon.

He whispered to Dan:

"Watch me."

"What for?"

"Ye will see me hero blood break out."

"Where?"

"Yez stag the coffin-back?"

"What coffin-back?"

"The escaped ghost that is giving Mr. Growler hard language."

"Yes."

"I will pulverize him."

"Kape out av it," wisely advised Dan; "it is none av yer marriage. Niver meddle wid anybody else's fights."

Muldoon wouldn't have it.

He was older than Dan, and Dan didn't know anything, anyhow.

He pranced up to the aged intruder.

"Go back to yer grave," added he; "we have no use for you."

The old man looked at him in astonishment.

"Who spoke to you?" he huskily asked.

"None av yer business, ye cemetery fairy! Get out; ye give me the chills."

"Suppose I won't?"

"But ye will!"

"How do you know?"

"I'll bounce yez out av the windy."

"What ails the door—is it broke?" placidly asked the old man.

The fat passenger chuckled.

Muldoon got irritated.

"I'm runnin' me own circus, and I don't nade a clown," growled he. "Now fly!"

He laid his hand upon the old man's coat.

"Take your hands off!" firmly said the other.

"I won't!"

"Then I will knock you down!"

"Arrah, yez couldn't prostrate a baby, yez couldn't!"

Right here Muldoon's prediction stopped.

Raising his crutch, the feeble old man knocked Muldoon into the middle of the car.

The other passengers shouted in surprise, while the Hon. Mike crawled into a seat, and began to cock a big pistol.

## CHAPTER X.

If there ever was an astonished man, it was Muldoon, as he picked himself up with aching head and bruised side.

"Who did it?" roared he.

"What?" pleasantly asked the aged stranger.

"Hit me wid a mountain?"

"Nobody."

"Then what was it?"

The aged stranger extended his crutch, and shook it pleasantly.

"There's what you got hit with, you big overgrown gorilla!" responded he; "and if you don't shut right up and crawl under a seat somewhere, I'll knock that terrier mug off you!"

"What pugilist hit me wid the crutch?" again demanded Muldoon, who had not gathered all of his senses as yet.

"It was I," smoothly replied the aged stranger.

"Yes."



"Ah, go back to yer grave! It is cemetery taffy yez are giving me. Ye cudn't break the back av a bedbug!"

The aged and infirm old man raised his crutch threateningly.

"See here, you famine sufferer," he cautioned, "you are altogether too frequent. If you don't shut that great mouth of yours, I'll have to pave the car with you!"

Muldoon pulled up his sleeves.

"Listen to the ghost!" roared he. "Faix, what body-snatcher left yez into the car? Go back to yez berrial plot, ould man, go back."

"Suppose I don't?"

"Thin I will be compelled to start a new funeral wid yez."

The aged stranger's answer was anything but spiritual. Indeed, it savored more of the Bowery than it did of the hereafter.

"Go bag your head, you far-down sheep stealer," said he.

"I can't help it," wept Muldoon, "I've got to do it. Ould daddy long legs, I remember I've a father av me own, but yet I've got to hit yez. It is me family honor that impels me!"

With which confession Muldoon started to clean window panes with his daring opponent.

What followed Muldoon can never clearly recollect.

But certain it is, that inside of two minutes he was reposing back of the stove with a most beautiful black eye and a nose of a decided bloody fresco.

As for the aged stranger, he was quietly wiping gore off his crutch with a silk handkerchief and chuckling in ghostly amusement.

And bit by bit Muldoon came to realize that the apparent almost dead man had licked him again.

Yet the Solid Man was not dismayed.

"I belave it is the divil," muttered he, as he got onto his feet, "yet I'll bate the spalpeen or die."

With this intention he again advanced.

"If ye wur twice as sick as ye are," he said, "I'd pound ye to a jelly!"

Just here a voice interfered.

It was a stentorian voice, a voice which Muldoon had often heard before, and it remarked in hoarse accents:

"Hold on!"

It was the Hon. Mike Growler's voice, and the Hon. Mike Growler himself emerged into the aisle.

It will be recollected that at the commencement of the dispute he had taken shelter behind a seat, and it was from the seat that he reappeared in view.

He had been diving into his valise during his temporary seclusion, and when he came out he was a good sign for a battlefield.

In one hand was a revolver.

In the other was a big bowie knife—the same which was reputed to have stretched thousands of Indians weltering in their gore.

Around his waist was strapped a big belt which held a second revolver and a second bowie knife.

"Hold on!" he said, in a terrible voice to Muldoon. "I'm an unchained gray wolf, and I'm hungry. I want to eat a man! Who hit yer?"

Muldon briefly replied that he wasn't quite sure himself who it was, a man or a spectre. But whatever it was, it was still standing in full view braced up on crutches.

The Hon. Mike proceeded to interrogate Muldoon's assailant.

"What d'yer mean?" asked he.

The aged stranger gazed calmly at him.

"What is it—oh, what is it?" he asked, in his cadaverous tones, indicating the Hon. Mike with his useful crutch; "did it grow out or did it flow out?"

Mike was about paralyzed.

"Great snakes!" gasped he, "does the man know his danger? Does he realize that I was the first man to break a bear's jaw, the first man to kill a Chinese, the first man to eat eagles?"

"Who cut the armory loose?" inquired the aged stranger, still regarding Mike as if he was a curiosity.

The passengers grew pale and trembled in horror.

The old man was surely courting his doom.

Was he tired and sick of life, that he dared to talk to the Hon. Mike in that style?

Why, the man must be a maniac!

Yet he did not seem to have the slightest alarm about his position.

He stood there quietly and looked Mike full in the eyes.

"Do you know what I would do, my man, if I were you?" he quietly inquired of Mike.

"What?"

"I'd sell those weapons of yours to a junk shop. You're too young to be trusted with them!"

Mike uttered a howl of rage at this verbal shot.

He cocked his pistol.

"Whoop!" bawled he. "I'm a hungry old wave from the Pacific

Ocean an' I want to roll all over you! Galloping gravestones—here goes off yer head!"

It did not, however.

With a dexterity which was perfectly surprising in so old a man, the aged stranger knocked Mike's revolver up, and in a trice planted a blow square between his eyes.

Mike reeled from its effects, and as he did so, involuntarily caught the old man by the hair.

A yell of surprise sounded from Muldoon's lips.

"Be Heavens, ye have snatched the sucker bald-headed!" he cried. "It was so—in a partial sense."

The old man's snow-white locks were held tight clasped in Mike's hand, as were also his spectacles and gray whiskers.

In their places were visible the bright eyes and close-cropped hair of a young man, which showed in strange contrast to the pallor of his cheeks and face.

Just then a quiet, dapper-looking man, with a smooth face, jumped up from the corner of the car.

He had got on board of the train at Omaha, and had not made friends with any of the passengers. But he had been watching the events which we have recorded with close and eager interest.

A silver-plated revolver glistened in his hands.

Its muzzle was pointed at the mysterious old man who had so suddenly become a young man.

"Surrender, Dandy Jim!" cried a metallic voice.

"Never, Dick Dawson!" was the reply, and before a person could anticipate his movement, he dashed past Mrs. Muldoon and pitched himself headfirst out of the open window.

"Howly Moses! luk at the sky-rocket!" yelled Muldoon. "What a lep for a circus."

Almost at the same minute, the dapper-looking man's pistol flashed, but the bullet imbedded itself harmlessly into the wood-work above the window.

Of course the passengers naturally wanted an explanation.

The quiet-looking man gave it.

"My name is Dick Dawson," he said. "I'm a New York detective. That fellow who jumped out of the window is a well-known criminal, named Jim Batty, 'Dandy Jim.' He's wanted for murder. I followed him all the way from New York, and I suspected he was on the train; but his disguise deceived me. If he had only kept quiet and not got into that muss, I would never have tumbled to him. But he is naturally very mussy, and he gave himself dead away. I'm sorry I wasn't a little quicker, for it's five hundred dollars reward out of my pocket—dead or alive."

Meanwhile Muldoon had notified the conductor of the occurrence, and the train was stopped and run back to the place where the criminal had jumped off.

No trace of him was to be found.

It was afterwards ascertained that when he jumped from the window, he had the good luck to fall into a marsh; and, strange to say, escaped with but a few scratches. He made his way to the nearest house, bought some clothes, and after many vicissitudes, made his way to Salt Lake City, only to be captured by the police there.

Very soon after occurred a ludicrous episode, which caused Muldoon to be laughed at a good deal.

One day the talk in the car turned upon Indians.

The query arose as to what the different conversationalists would do in case the train was attacked by the red sons of the forest.

Dan would be very brave, indeed, so he said.

He would place the women and children under the seat and fight to the last gasp.

He did not take much stock in Indians, anyhow.

They were no good.

He himself was worth a whole tribe, and he could lick a wigwam full of the best Indians that could be produced.

But Muldoon discounted Dan in his contempt for Indians.

He looked upon Indians as more insignificant than dandruff.

"Begorra," said he, "it is a lot av darty cowards they are. I wur capthured by Indians wanst meself."

"Where?" asked the alderman.

"Upon a daysert island in the Chinese Ocean."

"Who iver heard av Indians in the Chinayse Ocean?" expostulated Mrs. Muldoon.

"Wur ye iver there, Bridget Cawdelia?" asked Muldoon.

"No."

"Thin don't contradict me. The Chinayse Ocean is full av Indians. They grow wild there. They are siven fate six inches high, ivery wan av thim, and they carry tomahawks and slape in wigwams, same as our American Indians."

"I have a splendid poem in forty-four cantos about a North American Indian," interrupted Hippocrates Burns.

"Thin go out on the back platform and kill a brakeman wid it. If ye thry to read it here it is masticate yez I will."

Once more the poor poet was crushed, and he sank down dejected.



ly, while the alderman, desirous of leading Muldoon out, carelessly asked:

"Tell us about yer capthure, Terry."

Muldoon was nothing loath.

"I wur in command av a slave ship whin I was twenty," he began.

"Command av a slave ship at twenty? laughed Dan. "Get out—it wur digging pertaties in Tipperary ye wur at that age!"

Muldoon took no notice of the impolite interruption.

"The slave ship was wrecked upon a daysert island inhabited by Indians," he went on, "and I wur the only man saved. The Indians said I wur too swate to die—me face produced too much beauty av profile.

"So they adopted me, and I got a mash on the ould chief's daughter. She was a purty girl, but she was a little too copper-colored to suit me fastidity. She was between the color of a baked lobster and a smoked ham.

"Therefore I made up me mind to escape."

"Did yez?" asked Mrs. Muldoon.

"I did."

"How?"

"I set fire to the island, and burnt up all av the Indians except sivynty, whom I fought and killed wid a war club. Then I floated to the United States inside av a whale."

"This is why you've been such a Jonah ever since," chuckled the alderman.

"No aspersions," answered Muldoon, with dignity. "Ye niver fought anything in your life excipt snakes and toads when ye had the jimjams. As I said before, I killed sivynty of the savages wid a war club, for I was a great fighter in those days. The Indians used to cail me 'Wooden-eyed Muldoon, the Man Killer,' because one av me eyes looked woodeny in those days."

At the conclusion of this short but spirited narrative, Muldoon looked around to notice its effect upon his auditors.

Nobody was laughing or appeared to be doubting his words.

Even the Hon. Mike was paying serious attention, and had not opened his mouth.

Encouraged by the success of his initial yarn, Muldoon proceeded to spin one more elaborate and more full of taffy than the first, in which he slaughtered Indians in a style which was most gory.

Finally Hippocrates felt his blood begin to boil, and recollected that he himself had been stolen by Indians when in infancy.

On the strength of the brilliant effort of imagination he constructed a fairy tale in which he, too, killed Indians and married a beautiful princess, and got shot, and scalped, and burnt villages—in fact, he quite dwarfed Muldoon's flight of fancy.

Now it happened that there was on board of the train a variety troupe going to California.

Among their traps they had quite a lot of Indian dresses, used in an afterpiece.

The Hon. Mike had made himself solid among the members of the troupe, especially a light, active young fellow named Burgo, who was a light comedian and a boss liar.

He was rather good-looking, possessed the cheekiest of cheeks, and a very jerky, disconnected way of speaking, which was very comical.

Burgo willingly agreed to a proposal which Mike made.

It was that Burgo, Edwardo, Geoghegan, the alderman, St. Patrick, Muldoon's servant, Hon. Mike himself, and his servant, Pete, should disguise themselves as Indians, make a burlesque attack upon the train, and capturing Dan, Muldoon and Hippocrates Burns, have some fun with them.

The train stopped at a small station to coal and wood the engine for nearly two hours the next afternoon, and they would have lots of fun.

The ones who were to play the mock Indians were informed of the part which they were expected to play.

They were all willing—nay, anxious.

In fact, almost everybody in the cars, except, of course, the proposed victims, was told of the anticipated racket.

The next day was eagerly waited for.

It dawned bright and fair.

In the afternoon, as expected, the train halted at the wood station.

It was a dreary, desolate spot.

Huge forests lay upon the sides of the bleak mountain ridges, and all that was visible of human life was the listless men in care of the station, which was simply a rough hut.

It was a good place for Indians.

The conspirators had rigged up in the baggage car before the train had stopped.

Consequently they were all ready for the farce when that stoppage came.

The farce, we say—but it nearly developed into a tragedy; the

joke had a strange, unexpected, and yet comical denouement which the chief actors in the affair never anticipated.

If they had never would the Indian costumes have been donned, or the faces decked with war paint.

Muldoon, Dan and Hippocrates were sitting peaceably in the car chatting with the ladies.

Mary Ann, who was in the plot, shuddered as she looked at the uninviting prospect visible from the window.

"I do wish Mr. Growler was here," she remarked.

"Why?" queried Muldoon; "are ye broke up onto him?"

"No, but I'm afraid."

"Afraid av what?"

"Indians."

"Mary Ann," heroically replied Muldoon, "ye have me wid yez. Be Heavens, the redskin dogs run at the glance av me eye. Its majesty kills them wid terror."

"An' me, too, Katy," put in Dan; "show me an Indian and I'll show ye a dead man."

As for Hippocrates, he said, in general language, that he was ready to dye the car red with his life's blood sooner than that one hair of Mary Ann's head should be touched by the polluted paw of the wild and sanguinary scalper of the Western prairies.

Just then a most terrific chorus of war whoops and yells was heard.

"Indians!" shrieked Mary Ann.

The three men turned pale.

"It is only the engine in a fit," stammered Muldoon.

"No—no!" replied Mary Ann; "look at the door!"

Sure enough the door, or rather what was in the doorway, was well worth looking at.

Half a dozen of the most bloody-looking Indians, armed to the teeth, and flourishing their scalping-knives and tomahawks over their heads, came trooping in, making the place resound with their outeries.

"Save me!" begged Mrs. Muldoon, clinging to her husband.

Muldoon dove down under the seat, and Dan and Hippocrates followed his example.

The Indians trooped forward.

Wonderful to relate, none of our three heroes got up with postols in their hands and fire in their eyes, and wiped out the band.

Instead, their chief desire seemed to be to crawl down crack or knot hole and hide.

"Cowards!" hissed Mary Ann.

"We are not—we are consumptives," feebly protested Muldoon.

"I promised me dying mother niver to kill an Indian."

Just then, the leader of the savages, who was no other but the Hon. Mike, grabbed him by the collar.

"Ugh!" grunted the Hon. Mike. "Me big chief, eat paleface."

"I'm not a paleface," said Muldoon. "I'm a mahogany-colored blonde. Take the women if ye want to, but spare me!"

"Mercy!" gasped Hippocrates, who was in the grip of two other mock savages, while a third one collared Dan.

In vain Muldoon yelled for help.

Nobody attempted assistance.

Indeed, the other passengers did not seem to be really scared, although they screeched as if in duty bound.

The three were dragged out of the car, while one big savage (the alderman) made an exaggerated show of holding the train men in submission with a very rusty and very harmless pistol.

"Where are we going?" asked Muldoon.

"Kill paleface!" replied his captor.

"But I niver did nothing to yez. Do yez know who I am?"

"White dog!"

"I ain't; me name is Mister Terrence Muldoon, and I ain't——"

He was stopped by a sudden motion of the Hon. Mike's tomahawk, which indicated a desire to stop Muldoon's mouth with the handle of that plaything.

"White dog heap too much jaw," was the reproof administered to him.

The pseudo Indians dragged their captives to the forest nearby.

So scared was Hippocrates that he actually fainted.

This event was as unlooked for as it was unpleasant to the Hon. Mike.

"He always breaks up every excursion he goes on," he muttered, as he gave orders that Hippocrates should be deposited upon a grassy mound until he chose to come to.

Producing ropes, the Indians bound Muldoon and Dan to two trees which faced each other.

"I suppose we will be burnt up," reflected Muldoon, but Dan did not reply. Fright had driven him into a temporary state of driveling lunacy.

By way of amusement the sham savages began to fire tomahawks and knives just about Muldoon's and Dan's bodies, yelling all of the while as if they were mad.



## CHAPTER XI.

It is perhaps needless to say that the mock Indians had lots of fun with Muldoon and poor Dan.

As for Hippocrates Burns, he was a disappointment.

He had gone off and fainted, and anybody who can get amusement out of a man in a faint remains to be born.

Therefore the sport was all confined to Muldoon and Dan.

Hatchets were pitched at their heads, bowie knives whistled past their ears, and war clubs broke the bark of the trees around them.

Muldoon got desperate.

"If we are going to be kilt," said he, "there is no use av prolonging the enjoyment. Dan, brace up!"

Dan looked like bracing up.

He appeared more like a dish-rag every moment.

His face was pale, his hands were shaky, and the only firm thing about him was the rope which bound him to the tree.

"Shure, ye are as nervy as a Chinese lantern," remarked Muldoon; "put a little more action in yez toes an' I wud take yez for an accordion in full play!"

"They'll kill us," sobbed Dan.

"Who?"

"The Injuns."

"Divil a bit. There is one big sucker wid a battle-ax who has been chucking it at me for the last half hour, but nary wanst has he hit me. It is my opinion that his vision is obscured wid rye and rock."

"Howly Moses!" yelled Dan, "they're going to burn us!"

So it seemed.

The Hon. Mike and his painted followers were ostentatiously lugging in enough wood and brush to burn up a dozen men.

They piled it about the feet of the two captives.

"Phwat are ye at now, Sitting Bull?" queried Muldoon.

The Hon. Mike grunted euphoniously.

"Paleface make big blaze," sententiously said he.

Muldoon was reckless.

He had made up his mind to die, but he was going to die with all of the trouble and expense possible to his executioner.

"Phwat kind av wood have yez prepared the funeral pyre wid?" he asked.

"Pine," answered the Hon. Mike.

"Begorra! I will go to Heaven in a halo av rosewood smoke, or I will not go at all!"

With which daring declaration he proceeded to kick the piled-up wood away in the most independent style.

The Hon. Mike started to pick it up.

Suddenly there was a wild outcry in the bushes outside of where the party was at present.

A very much scared Indian staggered in.

"Hellee, damee!" bawled he, in most un-Indian accents.

It was St. Patrick.

The Hon. Mike, in his surprise, forgot his assumed character.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Jokee no goodee no longer," was the reply. "Real Injuns! Shootee pig-tailee loffee Chinaman!"

"Mother of Moses!" cried Muldoon, "would yez hear the Indian articulate laundry language. Behead the culprit!"

But the Hon. Mike did not feel like beheading anybody.

He was puzzled and perplexed at St. Patrick's words.

"Real Injuns!" cried he.

"Yes," answered St. Patrick. "Gottee real tomahawks—scalpee evlebody!"

As if in confirmation of his words, dire groans, mingled with sturdy Milesian oaths, issued from a clump of bushes near by.

Turning his eyes in that direction, the Hon. Mike was surprised to see the alderman in the clutches of a sinewy savage.

And the sinewy savage was real. His copper-colored skin, his body naked to the waist, and the mingled red and yellow war paint upon his face showed that he was genuine, good, and no counterfeited.

The Hon. Mike's face paled.

"Tailless prairie chickens!" cried he, "it's a real Injun. Where did he drop from?"

Muldoon noticed his surprise.

"Ye shud be glad to see yez brother," declared he; "faix, ye are a brave lot. It only takes about four hundred to burn up a couple av poor white men loike ourselves. I expict ye will nade the assistance av a fire brigade av yez to bury us."

The Hon. Mike, though, was incapable of reply.

His eye had noticed, all about the edges of the woods, at least fifty dusky forms, creeping toward them.

"Lost!" he exclaimed.

Hardly had he uttered the word before a wild war whoop—real, this time, for nobody could doubt its genuineness—burst upon the air.

"More vocalism," said Muldoon; "it's a foine accent they have to yell clams down an alley."

The Hon. Mike pulled off his feathers, and rubbed the paint from his face.

"Mister Growler!" yelled Muldoon.

"Yes," responded the Hon. Mike; "it were not real Injuns we were, but make-believe."

"Thin it was a joke?" asked Muldoon, who was so surprised by the course which events were taking that he hardly knew what he was saying.

"It was a joke," answered the Hon. Mike, with a ghastly grin, "but sure as I am an old volcano what spits lava, I'm afraid it's going to turn into a tragedy!"

He was not far from the truth.

Inside of five minutes a wandering band of real Indians, commanded by a burly old broken-nosed chief, whose face alone was sufficient to stop a clock, had swept down upon our friends—captives, mock-Indians and all, and made the whole lot prisoners.

It was a case of biter bit, with the exception that the bit fared just as well as the biter.

The real Indians gained an easy and unresisted victory.

The only exception was Edwardo Geoghegan, who tried to lick about seventeen redskins with an old ice pick.

But he got knocked on the head so quickly by an iron-tipped war club, in the hands of a pig-faced brave, that he did not care for five minutes whether he was going to get killed or not.

The broken-nosed chief surveyed the mock redskins in disgust.

"Ugh!" he grunted; "palefaces much paint. Neber look like Indians. Kill 'em all!"

"Bully for yez, ould waxworks!" coincided Muldoon, who felt decidedly sore over the racket which had been played upon him. "Bile 'em all wid the exception av me!"

The broken-nosed chief, however, did not avail himself of Muldoon's advice immediately.

He realized that he was in too close proximity to the train to render a delay advisable.

"White dogs on train have guns," he growled. "Injun skip."

Accordingly releasing Muldoon and Dan, and awakening Hippocrates Burns from his faint, by the simple process of placing a burning torch under his nose, he hastily secured his prisoners and ordered a forced march.

That march was a nice picnic.

As Muldoon afterward declared, it was the finest fun in the world, next to being drowned.

Through woods and swamps, the briers and ragged bushes of which scratched the limbs and tore the faces of the captives, they were hurried by the Indians.

Muldoon was in custody of a most villainous-looking brave, who had plainly not been washed from his birth, and undoubtedly not then.

Consequently he was as nice-looking as a dung-pile, and smelled like a dumping ground.

Muldoon tried to conciliate him.

"It is a big crusher yez must be wid the fair sex," said he; "if ye shud iver walk down Broadway it wud be many love suicides yez wud occasion on account av the sublimity av yer good luks."

"Ugh!" grunted his guard.

"Av coorse. Wud yez lind me a bottle av the perfumery ye use. Faix, ye smell like a June rose—Heaven forgive the lie!"

"Ugh!"

"Shure yer conversation is very entertaining. Where are we going, anyhow?"

"Ugh!"

Muldoon gave it up in disgust.

The way in which some dirty, red-skinned rascal who never killed anything except a cat will sit down and relate to you how he has wallowed in the blood of a thousand foes, and burnt up whole towns all by himself, is simply sublime.

Therefore, judging from his own diminutive knowledge of human nature, Muldoon's captor imagined that Muldoon was bragging about his wickedness.

And the more wicked and cold-hearted and barbarous an Indian shows himself to be, the more he is esteemed by his fellow savages.

By the process of reasoning which I have tried to describe, the Indian got it into his head that Muldoon was a big man.

He treated him with much more respect and consideration afterward, loosening his bonds so that they did not chafe the skin, and once actually offered him a puff at a pipe which he smoked.

It was a nice pipe.

It was as strong as an ox, and one suck at the tobacco which it contained was enough to knock a man off his feet.

Muldoon took one puff.

"It is honey dew!" gasped he. "I ain't a hog. One draw at that ash barrel is enough. Faix, I am afraid the swateness will spoil my stomach. If ye have some sweitzer kase to smoke, it will be a relief."



The other captives did not fare so well. They were kicked and hit and clubbed about as bad as dummies in a pantomime.

Especially Hippocrates Burns.

He was in especial charge of the broken-nosed old chief, who appeared to consider the fact of the poet's being found in a faint a personal insult.

"Paleface like squaw!" he grunted, as he batted Hippocrates over the head with his tomahawk, and spat in his face. "Him faint, boys. Big chief stop dat. Knock faint all out of white squaw!" He kept his word.

Hippocrates began to imagine, after a second dose of batting and spitting, that there would not be enough left of him to get in a second faint.

After a dreary tramp of several miles, a stoppage was ordered. It was a sort of temporary camp.

In rude and hastily constructed brush huts were gathered the old men, women and children of the tribe awaiting the return of the braves.

Muldoon, with his inherent gallantry, scrutinized the women.

They were most homely, savage-looking and fierce females, more suited for a murder than a nice, quiet, domestic home circle.

"What a set av candidates for a beauty show," dryly observed Muldoon; "what splendid signs they wud make for an arcade av junk stores. If I had that cross-eyed fairy over there as me personal property I wud make a fortune lending her out as a scare-crow."

The broken-nosed chief gave him a whack with the handle of his scalping-knife, to intimate that Muldoon was thought better of when silent than when talking.

"That's right," muttered the Solid Man; "hit me whin I've got me hands tied. Faix, if I had ye in New York, me laddy-buck, I'd lay for yez wid the gas-house gang and make coke out av ye. Hit me again, I've got no friends."

The chief this time paid no attention to him.

He had ranged the mock Indians, the Hon. Mike, the alderman, St. Patrick, Burgo, and the rest of the jokers, into line, where they stood looking very miserable and sick.

"Water," commanded he.

"Make it whisky, ye Good Templar!" advised Muldoon.

"Water," repeated the chief.

Half a dozen old squaws brought half a dozen buckets of the aqueous element immediately from a near by brook.

The chief dashed the bucketfuls, one at a time, into the disgusted faces of his captives.

Then he took an old red shirt, which looked as if it had been worn for years, and commenced rubbing them.

Their howls and yells at this unexpected and decidedly unpleasant treatment could be heard for a mile.

"It is unaccustomed they are to fresh water bathing," remarked Muldoon, who could not keep his mouth shut to save his neck.

But the fresh water bathing had the effect anticipated by the old chief.

It washed all of the paint off the faces of those subjected to it.

Their white skins stood fully revealed.

"Ugh!" he grunted, "no Indians—paleface skunks!"

"Do yez hear the purty names he's calling yez?" asked Muldoon of his friends. "Bedad, his face wud luk purty on a New Year's card, wudn't it!"

"You go soak!" was the Hon. Mike's curt retort. "I'm a whistling old tornado, I am, an' if I ever get loose I'll blow over about four million Injuns!"

"Taffy!" plainly criticised Muldoon.

"Howly Moses! wud yez luk at it."

"Look at what?" growled the Hon. Mike.

"I have no name for it. Tell me what it is and it is yours."

"Where is it?"

The "it" to which Muldoon referred was a young and beautiful maiden.

That is to say, probably she was so considered by the Indians. Yet none of us would reckon her a paragon of female loveliness.

First, she was hare-lipped.

Second, she was a trifle lame.

Third, one of her eyes was out.

Fourth, she possessed the beautiful symmetry of an ale cask, and her lower lip had been cut loose somehow, and dangled down over her chin.

To cap the climax, a census-taker of a truthful disposition would have placed her age at about sixty-seven.

She had been evidently struck by Hippocrates' appearance ever since he had arrived upon the scene.

Whether it was his woe-begone appearance or the beautiful shape of his Roman nose which attracted her, we cannot say.

But she was smitten, and she coyly approached him.

"A maiden fair to see.  
The pearl av minstrelsy,"

sang Muldoon. "Arrah, she is too young to be in a shawl. Put on short dresses and a sun-bonnet, ye baby."

As the squaw did not know what Muldoon was saying, it did not bother her.

She continued to smile sweetly upon Hippocrates and smoothed his cheek with her fair hand, which looked like a dried codfish.

"Him my bird," said she.

"Oh, Heavens!" groaned Muldoon.

"White bird belongs to me," she lisped.

The white bird didn't appear as if he felt over joyful or exceedingly hilarious over the prospect.

Indeed, his appearance indicated the reverse.

"I belong to you?" asked he.

"Yes."

"How?"

"I chose you for brave."

Muldoon knew enough of Indian customs to realize the full meaning of the words.

She had pitched upon Hippocrates as a husband.

But Hippocrates did not understand it so.

He didn't like it for a cent.

"Git out, ye rag-bag!" said he. "I don't belong to ye. I belong to myself, and I am copyrighted at Washington."

Wah-i-ton would not have it.

"White bird my husband!" she said. "Come with me."

"An' I'll trate ye dacent," finished Muldoon.

She pulled him away bodily from the rest of the captives and disappeared.

Pretty soon Great Bear gave the order to march.

A new surprise awaited Muldoon, Dan, and the Hon. Mike Growler.

Three papooses were brought forth. They were strapped upon the backs of the miserable trio.

But meanwhile a comical accident had occurred to Muldoon.

A dirty-faced brave, for some reason or another, got dead mashed upon Muldoon's pants.

He wanted them.

And as he was a person of some little importance in the tribe (he had killed one or two cripples), Muldoon was stripped of his garments and an old petticoat placed upon him.

A comical sight he was, too, especially with the papoose strapped upon his back.

A procession was then started for the village of the tribe.

The braves led the way, while Muldoon, Dan and the Hon. Mike followed with the papooses upon their backs, under guard of a most horrible squaw armed with a big whip.

## CHAPTER XII.

It is perhaps needless to say that our friends' onward progress, under convoy of the horrible old squaw and the whip, and several other assistant squaws, just as ugly and with as big whips as the first, was not a march of joy.

Besides, the papooses were heavy; real, substantial babies, who gazed with owl-like solemnity out of their baskets.

"Niver did I think I wud sink to be a nurse girl," complained Muldoon. "Whin I was elected alderman, I imagined I had reached the lowest depth av human degradation, but it seems I was wrong."

"Wildcats and whales!" groaned the Hon. Mike, "if I ever get free again, I'm going to start a slaughter-house."

"What for?" queried Dan.

"For papooses," grimly replied Mike: "the kid on my back is scratching an ulcer into my skin with his toe nails."

"Thin ye are a dead man," gravely said Muldoon.

"Why?"

"The toe nails av all Indian children are poisoned at their birth."

"Oh, you go whistle it to the breeze," sneered Mike. "Yer a pretty lookin' galoot. Ye'd look nice at a marriage—ye'd be a nice bride."

"It is dead gone I am upon the stylishness of his dress," groaned Dan. "If ye only had a hoopskirt now, Muldoon, ye'd be a belle."

"I wouldn't dare take him into a graveyard," said the Hon. Mike. "His appearance would wake up all the corpses ahead of time."

Muldoon took the jesting good-naturedly.

He realized that crying never picked up spilt milk, and it was better to joke and be merry while they had a chance, for there was no knowing what might befall them when they reached the Indian village.

The old squaw, however, objected to their hilarity.



She was a cheerful old beast, and would have liked nothing better than to cut all of their throats.

She would have enjoyed it better than a picnic or a strawberry festival.

Therefore she rapped them smartly with her whip.

"Be still!" grunted she.

"I wish ye were still," growled Dan.

"Still in the grave," muttered Muldoon.

"An' if I only had this infernal kid off my back for two minutes I'd place her there," said the Hon. Mike, directing a most diabolical look at the playful maiden, which she reciprocated by a second vigorous slash of the whip, which caused the Hon. Mike to dance around in a style which threatened to dislocate completely the bones of the papoose upon his back.

After quite a journey the home of the tribe was reached.

It was pleasant enough, situated upon a small river in a grove of lofty trees, whose green-leaved branches swayed softly above the brown wigwams, affording a welcome relief from the hot prairie sun.

"I've seen worse places," said Dan, as he caught sight of the nestling wigwams, and heard the coo of the wind through the foliage, and the babble of the running river.

"I recollect wan meself," remarked Muldoon; "it wur a cow stable in Gowanus."

The Hon. Mike, however, had no eye for the beautiful in nature.

He was concerned about what was to be their ultimate fate.

"I don't believe they will kill us," he ventured to say.

"Shure," answered Muldoon, "and bile us afterward. It is cannibals they are. I can tell it by the expression av their teeth."

"They'll burn us, I guess," put in Dan.

And from that hour forward Dan persisted in the belief that they were to be burned.

"Divil a bit did I iver drame whin I lift ould Oireland," moaned he, "that I'd go up to Heaven loike smoke from a tay kettle."

"Wait till I ax the ould brunette," said Muldoon, and he made a most gracious bow to the old squaw, who cordially acknowledged the compliment by slashing him alongside of the face with her whip.

"Madam," said he, "will ye be plazed to open yer roseate lips to tell us if we are about to suffer extermination? There's an illigant allegorical spache av metaphor for yez!"

"White fool talk like bow—he crooked," was her reply. "He no shut up, Prairie Flower kill him."

"Who's Prairie Flower?"

By comprehensive gestures she gave him to understand that she was the fay who bore that sweet and poetical name.

"Howly Moses!" groaned Muldoon, "if that is a prairie flower a stink weed wud blind yez eyes. If the Indian young ladies wur as purty as their names it is a race av beauties they would be. But unfortunately they ain't."

With which vividly intellectual remark Muldoon solved the matter to his own satisfaction.

As they entered the village they were greeted by the stay-at-home members of the band.

After various pow-wows and embracings on the part of the war band and the stay-at-homes, the captives were locked up in a big wigwam for the night. As they were bound tightly with ropes and guarded by six dusky braves, escape was impossible.

At twilight they were provided with supper.

It was a nice supper.

For an ostrich.

It consisted of some dried articles (probably some dried bear's meat), and water.

The captives were released long enough to enable them to partake of this delicious meal.

Muldoon chewed away upon his portion of the delicacy until his jaws ached.

"It is as aisily ate as a yard av sidewalk!" groaned he. "I wonder will we have a cellar door for dessert?"

The meal being finished, their hands were again bound, and for two or three hours all was silence except the measured tread of the sentinels outside, and the distant revelry which ensued from the village, where the Indians ere holding high carnival in honor of their success.

The monotony, however, was presently disturbed.

It will be recollected that the previous day Hippocrates Burns, the poet-laureate of Muldoon's Boarding House, had been captured by the Sweet Wah-i-ton (or Flat Irons), who had claimed him as her husband.

He had been taken in charge by the sweet maiden, and had disappeared from the gaze of his friends, divers being their conjectures in regard to his fate.

Dan was the only one who had any certain belief in regard to the matter.

He said Hippocrates was to be burnt.

But as Dan entertained the same monotonous idea in regard to the ultimate disposition of all the party, his remark did not gain very much credence.

Indeed, Dan appeared to be rapidly becoming a monomaniac upon the subject of burning.

As Muldoon said:

"He belaved Dan's heart wud break wid disappointment if nobody got burnt."

And it happened that the prisoners were just discussing Hippocrates when the door of the wigwam was pushed aside.

A most melancholy figure entered, whose identity was disclosed by the light of several pine torches, borne by several Indians, who followed close at his heels.

It was the person whom they had just been speaking of.

It was Hippocrates.

But what a looking Hippocrates!

If he had walked down Broadway looking as he did at that moment, the boys would have pitched bricks at him.

He was got up in evident imitation of an Indian.

His hair was plaited, and bright turkey feathers stuck into it.

His face was stained with pigment until it looked as if he had been shot head-first into a paint factory.

A dirty old blanket was draped about his person, and instead of pants he sported leggings trimmed with porcupine quills.

"It is Hippocrates' ghost," solemnly declared Dan. "He's been burnt up!"

As if to confute Dan's assertion, the above-mentioned ghost held up his hand.

"Don't ye recognize me, boys?" asked he, in a voice which sounded like the accents of a half-starved ghoul.

"No," boldly answered Muldoon. "For Heaven's sake, what sort av society do ye suppose I mixed in before I came here?"

"Ye don't know Hippocrates?" continued the other, as if he had lost every friend in the world.

"Get out, yer renegade!" hoarsely said the Hon. Mike. "What are yer doing in the redskin duds? Before I'd turn Indian I'd be scalped. I'm a rolling old river, I am, and I flow one way all of the time; don't yer furget it."

"I couldn't help it," sobbed Hippocrates.

"Why not?"

"She made me do it."

"Who?"

"That old she-devil."

"Wah-i-ton?"

"Yes; she said if I didn't, she'd pour oil on my head, and set me on fire."

"Bust her in the jaw!" bravely advised the Hon. Mike. "She can only scratch your eyes out."

"She's g-going to marry me!"

"Whin does the ceremony take place?" asked Muldoon.

"To-morrow. I wish I wur dead!"

"Ah, it's a festive bridegroom ye are!" Muldoon criticised; "it is joyous and merry ye shud be, instead av lukiing loike an undertaker in search av a job."

"I wish I wur an undertaker," wept Hippocrates; "I wish I wur a corpse. Ye know what a beauty the ould cow av a promised wife av mine is."

"She loked to me loike a sign for a hospital," replied Muldoon.

"So she is—and worse than all she has a wooden leg. She hit me over the head wid it last noight because I wouldn't kiss her."

"Well," sagely said Muldoon, "yer married loife promises to be a torrent av merriment. But how came ye here?"

Hippocrates explained.

His blooming and beautiful bride that was to be, by some wonderful chance, was in a good humor that night.

Hippocrates wanted to take leave of his friends before his execution—beg pardon, marriage—so he had asked her to let him do so.

Strange to relate she did so.

More than that, she obtained permission for the visit from the broken-nosed old chief, who dreaded her tongue worse than he did the itch.

It was granted, however, upon one condition.

That was, that he was to be escorted by a guard.

So it was that Hippocrates and his attendants chanced to be in the wigwam at that particular moment.

A few minutes were spent in talk of personal matters.

Then Muldoon asked a question upon a subject which was uppermost in the minds of all.

"What are they going to do wid us?" he queried.

A gleam of dismal pleasure shot from Hippocrates' eye.

"You've got to run the gauntlet," replied he.

"An' thin we'll get burnt," woefully uttered Dan. "I know they'll do it."

Hippocrates assured him that the supposition was wrong. The



Indians did not mean to injure their prisoners, but intended to hold them until a monetary reward was offered for their release. In the meantime, however, they meant to have some fun with them.

Consequently, they were all to "run the gauntlet" the next day.

He was about to add further remarks, when one of his attendants tapped him upon the shoulder and gave him to understand that the interview was at an end.

The poor fellow completely broke down as he bid his faithful friends good-by.

"Ye may niver see me agin," remarked he, with the tears in his eyes; "me swate wife may break me head wid her wooden leg before to-morry."

Just after sunset their guard roused them up, and stripped them to the waists.

Then they were led out into the village, into an open spot in the centre of the clustered wigwams.

Upon this were ranged two lines of men, women and children, extending probably for fifty feet, the two lines being separated by perhaps a space of nine or ten feet.

The redskins who formed these lines were armed with every conceivable sort of weapons, from the painted brave with his ponderous war club to the almost naked boy with his little bow and arrow.

This was the "gauntlet," and down its centre the captives were to run, exposed to assault from all who formed it.

"Phwat a playsant promenade," was Muldoon's remark.

He was the only one who said anything; the others gritted their teeth, but resolved to bear the ordeal bravely.

Even St. Patrick, the Chinese, braced up, and resolved to do "justee samee Melican man."

Away they started; Dan leading.

They were pelted, and pounded, and battered. Dan was caught by the hair by a muscular squaw; Muldoon got fits on all sides, while a young imp of an Indian perched upon the Hon. Mike's shoulder, and added to his misery by yelling like a fiend.

Yet they got through it somehow.

Strange to say, Dan never stopped when he finished the gauntlet.

He kept right on, running like a deer through the woods.

Stranger to say, the rest, sore and bruised as they were, followed suit.

Even St. Patrick ran in a style which would seem to prove him a dangerous competitor in a go-as-you-please contest.

### CHAPTER XIII.

The captives did not stop running after they had passed the terrible gauntlet.

Instead, they kept right on, plunging through briers and shrubbery, mud and morass.

The Indians were at first almost paralyzed at the audacity of the "white dogs."

They looked at one another in speechless surprise, the whites all the while increasing their lead for liberty.

At last the broken-nosed old chief, who had done some star carroms upon Muldoon with his war club, found speech.

"They would escape! After them!" he shouted in the Indian tongue.

His braves needed no second bidding.

Grasping whatever weapons they could pick up, they flew after the fleeing whites.

But it is a maxim, gray and time-worn by the experience of centuries, but nevertheless true, that a stern chase is a long chase. So it proved in this instance.

By some species of natural miracle, Muldoon and his plucky followers succeeded in escaping from their pursuers, which is to be much wondered at, noting the fact that the Indians were trained athletes and good runners.

Nevertheless, it remains a fact that they did escape, and in two hours' time found themselves, breathless and exhausted, in a small clump of trees many miles distant from the camp of their enemies.

No sounds of pursuit were heard in the air.

All was still except the chirp of insects, and the occasional whirr of the wings of some prairie bird flying over their heads.

Muldoon sank down exhausted upon a mossy bank.

"Be Heavens!" gasped he, "it is submerged I am in sweat. I wouldn't run that way again if I wur to be drowned to-morrow!"

"Indians never drown," solemnly corrected Dan. "They always burn."

"I have only one regret," said Muldoon, "an' that is that the

redskin devils didn't burn Dan. Faix, his heart is broke wid the disappointment."

"Niver again will I lave New York!" declared the alderman. "Begob, I'd give sixty dollars to be sitting on a bench at Battery Park now, watching a ferryboat sink."

"Oh, if I had only had a show!" exclaimed the Hon. Mike.

"A show to do what?" asked Muldoon.

"Kill Injuns."

"Ye had as much show as anybody. Shure, all I saw ye kill was a grasshopper, and ye stepped on him by accident."

"Bears and buffaloes!" growled the Hon. Mike, "didn't yer see me kill that chief when we wur first captured. I took him by the neck, chucked him against a rock and broke his backbone. Then over ninety of them got onto me an' collared me. Oh, if they'd only gave me a show, I'd licked the whole crowd."

Muldoon dissented from this opinion.

He was gradually getting over his idea of the Hon. Mike's big fighting powers.

He said that, to the best of his knowledge, the Hon. Mike had been captured by a one-eyed squaw armed with only a broom, and that, so far from the Hon. Mike showing any decided bravery, he had got down upon his knees and begged for his life.

Whereupon, the Hon. Mike got mad and sulked off by himself, stating that they could starve before he would pilot them to civilization, as he had meant to do.

A very frugal lunch was indulged in at noontide.

It consisted of berries, and water from a small stream near by.

But, as Muldoon said:

"Roast stove-pipe ate in liberty, is better than ice crame in a dungeon;" to which sentiment all expressed their accordance except the Hon. Mike, who grumblingly said he wished he had stayed with the Indians.

After dinner, drowsiness stole over the little band.

It was determined to take a general nap; but first a guard must be appointed to warn the sleepers of any possible danger.

Everybody coincided that a guard was necessary, and was perfectly willing for anybody else to take the post.

But nobody wanted to be a guard himself.

Finally, after much wrangling, St. Patrick was appointed to the post, much to his disgust.

He was placed at the edge of the thicket, with a big stick, and a warning from Muldoon that if he was caught asleep his life would pay the penalty.

"It is anxious I am to signalize meself, anyway, by massacreeing a rice-eater," cheerfully remarked Muldoon; "so kape good watch. If ye should get aslape, and the Injuns should creep past ye and scalp us, I would lay ye out so stiff that ye wud have to have yer coffin built around ye!"

With which genial advice Muldoon went to sleep, and St. Patrick assumed watch.

St. Patrick had a little tin joss (an idol) with him, which he had carried through all his vicissitudes, and when he had nothing else to do, or nothing to steal, he would put the little joss up to pray to it.

Accordingly, he pulled it out of his pocket, took off several chews of tobacco which had adhered to its face, brushed it off carefully with his hand, set it up upon a turf, and commenced praying to it in a most idolatrous and irreligious manner.

He got so engrossed in this pastime—for in addition to his own prayers, Chinese etiquette required him to pray for six or seven hundred dead ancestors, whose only creditable acts, anyhow, had been to die—that he did not notice the approach of a figure which, at first glance, one would take for an Indian.

The figure suddenly sprang upon St. Patrick.

The Chinaman arose with a yell, and pitched the little tin joss full at the intruder.

It whizzed harmlessly past his head, but its unexpected vicinity caused the stranger to recoil.

Now was St. Patrick's chance.

He rushed wildly among the sleepers.

"Wakee up—wakee up! Injuns comee campe—raisee hellee! Slebenty-eighty or ninety Injuns! Slaint Patrick pitchee joss at 'em—killee four!"

It is needless to add that the sleepers got up in a hurry.

Muldoon was the first man, and his first impulse was to run.

But before he decided to do so, he thought it would not be a bad plan to take a look around to see how many Indians there actually were.

To his surprise and joy, no tribe of painted savages appeared with gleaming tomahawks and flashing scalping-knives.

Instead, all that was visible was one poor apparition—a sorry apology for a genuine son of the plains—who seemed to be the most scared person around.

"Begorra, if the byes back me, I belave I can lick him," declared Muldoon.



The boys, recovered from their first fright, were perfectly willing to back him.

All except the Hon. Mike.

At the first alarm he had mysteriously disappeared.

With a wild yell, the boys, headed by Muldoon rushed upon the solitary savage.

He appeared to have been suddenly attacked by the chills and fever.

At any rate, he shook like a leaf, and bawled out:

"Stop!"

Muldoon didn't want to stop.

Here was a chance for glory.

He wanted to kill an Indian, anyhow, and here was a sick Indian with no weapon, and no visible friends.

What better chance could Muldoon possibly have to exterminate the redskins?

Accordingly, he rushed forward with a screech that was enough to frighten the feathers off a chicken.

The Indian's face paled beneath his paint, and he shook more than ever.

"Mr. Muldoon," bawled he, "don't yez know me?"

"Me acquaintance wid cigar-signs is limited," declared Muldoon.

"Stand where ye are for foive seconds, ye ould woman crippler, and I'll butcher yez!"

"Look at me!" begged the supposititious Indian. "I am Hippocrates Burns."

Muldoon paused.

So did those behind him.

Everybody looked disgusted.

"Just my luck," growled Muldoon; "whin I thought I had an Indian dead sure, he turns out not to be an Indian. Hippocrates Burns, ye are a Jonah—yez break up ivery bit av fun I iver had!"

"I couldn't help it," said Hippocrates. "I escaped."

"From yer bride?"

"Yes."

"Where did ye lave the lovely wildflower av the forest?"

A grin stole over the poet's classic face.

"Whin ye escaped," said he, "the whole tribe wint after ye, excepting me would-be wife. Faix, I recited seven poems from mimory. She wur thrown into a trance after hearing five, and at the conclusion av the siventh I belave she wur slumbering in death."

"But how did ye find our trail?"

Hippocrates said he had not found it at all.

The only thing he had found was two suspender buttons belonging to Dan.

About ten minutes after Hippocrates arrived, and after congratulations had been exchanged on both sides, a most awful howl issued from the rocky channel through which the little stream ran where our adventurers had got the water to wash down their frugal meal.

"What is it?" queried Muldoon.

"I belave it's a sea-lion," solemnly said Dan.

"It's an ostrich," corrected the alderman. "It is meself that is familiar wid the wail av the ostrich."

It was not, however, either a sea-lion or an ostrich.

It was the voice of the Hon. Mike.

And the Hon. Mike himself shortly after appeared, rising among the reeds and vines which decked the streamlet's bed.

He was loaded with rocks.

In his right hand he held a particularly big and ugly one, while upon his left arm rested half a dozen smaller stones and rocks.

"Show 'em to me," bawled he, waving his big rock. "I'll smash 'em to pieces. Oh, I'm a Deadwood David, I am, and if I had a sling I'd pave the prairie wid Injuns—whoop! Let me gaze at a redskin!"

"Faix, it is the first time I iver saw the jim-jams brought on by cold water," observed Muldoon.

"Let 'em come six at once," roared the Hon. Mike. "I'm good for 'em. I ain't no old waterspout that drowns Injuns. Oh, no! Where is a son of a squaw, I'll rock him to sleep."

Dan hastened to assure the Hon. Mike that there were no Indians about.

Hippocrates had been the only representation of the breed, and he wasn't real.

"My blasted luck!" shouted Mike, dropping his rock. "Jest as I get all ready to annihilate a tribe there ain't no tribe. Blast it!" and he sank down with a face which indicated the deepest despair.

The others interchanged looks, and Muldoon winked solemnly at Dan.

"Ain't he a darlint?" he whispered to his brother. "It is me belief that the sucker wint and hid beneath a pebble till he discovered the Indians were a myth, an' thin he rushed out here wid his stoneyard to crush us with his reckless dare-deviltry."

But he did not tell Mike this, and so Mike postured around for quite a little while, and told blood-curdling stories relative to the fate of the Indians had he met them face to face.

Hippocrates now advised an immediate move.

He said it was highly probable that the Indians would get upon their trail, and if their movements were not expeditious, capture them before nightfall.

Therefore, a hasty retreat was at once decided upon.

For four days they roamed the prairies and woods, subsisting upon whatever they could get (which was decidedly little), and sleeping in the open air, until by chance they ran across two border scouts, who for a promised consideration piloted them into Deadwood City.

They hastened to a hotel, explained their situation to the landlord and asked for board and refreshments till Muldoon could telegraph to his lawyer in San Francisco and obtain a remittance.

At first the landlord refused to trust them.

He expressed his opinion, in most emphatic tones, that they were beats, and started to get out a revolver from under his bar, threatening, in plain and simple language, to "put daylight through 'em if they didn't skip."

While they were talking, an uncouth figure entered the bar-room.

He was a good type of the border man, sparse, but well built, with a grizzled, weather-beaten face, tanned by constant exposure to sun and wind to a color somewhat resembling an ox-hide.

He stalked up to the bar, ordered whisky straight, and was just about drinking it down at one gulp, when his eye caught sight of the Hon. Mike's face.

The glass dropped and shivered upon the floor.

"Thunder and lightning!" he exclaimed; "Mike Growler, or I'm a dead old yellow prairie dog."

The voice of an angel could not have sounded sweeter to the Hon. Mike's ears just then. It was the far-off sound of splashing water to the thirsty traveler in the desert.

"One-Eared Rube!" ejaculated he.

"Yer bet," came the ready response from the weather-beaten one's lips; "wild dogs and yelping jackasses, shootin'-irons and Mexican yaller-bellies, where did yer drop from? Why, I been told as how yer had stopped fingerin' the keards, and from being a good, respectable gambler, a-looked up to by his feller men, had went an' eternally disgraced yerself by going to Congress. Blank yer eyes! ye're a welcome figger, yer are."

"It's One-Eared Rube, my pard in many a gold-digging," hurriedly explained the Hon. Mike to his friends. "Lord, boys, he's bed-rock—solid as a brick house. Wait till yer see ther old baby make the landlord take water. It wud be jist like the old lamb to pull out his pistol here an' start to stocking a graveyard."

In a few words Mike expressed his and his companions' predicament to the old trapper.

One-Eared Rube's action upon the subject was wholly characteristic of the man.

He produced two big revolvers and laid them upon the bar, before the nose of the surprised landlord.

"Them 'ere ain't rattles," calmly remarked he, "nather are they cucumbers. But they're liable to go off mighty sudden when people's ideas don't jine 'zactly with mine. Last night I stopped into a saloon up the road, an' a gang of no-goods remarked that I was a liar. I differed. Now, friend, there was a very surprising accident in that 'ere place. Those 'ere pistols went off, an' they kept a-goin' off till every one of those slouches laid upon the floor. An' the next mornin' the coroner sent me a note expressing of his thanks for giving him a lift in business. Now, landlord, I want these 'ere folks to be took care of—dern the expense. I guess I kin stand it."

The landlord was all smiles in a second.

He apologized very sweetly, showed the party to the best room in the house, and did everything up to the queen's taste, not neglecting that essential ingredient of western cordiality, a drink all around.

While they were in their room One-Eared Rube showed up with a big bundle of clothes.

It is needless to say that the gift was well-timed, and the frontiersman was thanked in a style which made his honest cheeks fairly blush.

"Be Heavens!" enthusiastically said Muldoon, "if ye will come to New York ye can have me whole boarding house, wid divil a cent's expinses. An' it is ride yez around in a four-horse barouche I will, to let yez gaze at the soights."

"Just you don't mention it," said Rube. "I've got something I got especially for ye."

"Phwat?"

"A high hat!"

"Where did ye get it? Begorra, I'm saved now, shure."



"I took it off a Boston drummer. He had a gall to come into Deadwood with a high hat and a red necktie. The boys would have stood the high hat, but the red necktie washed the claim. His funeral takes place to-morrow morning."

Muldoon wisely commented not upon the incident of prairie life, but tried on the hat.

It fitted him to a nicety.

Then he was a happy man. He wished it was St. Patrick's day.

"If it wur, me hat would take the biscuit away from the other ould hats in the procession," he remarked.

It so chanced that Rube was flush, and of course his friends must share his prosperity.

He loaned them all money, and that night they all started to see the Deadwood elephant.

Indications go to prove that they did see it.

Anyhow Muldoon came home in a barrel upon a wheelbarrow, the alderman and Rube went to bed upon the sidewalk outside of the hotel, Edwardo Geoghegan and St. Patrick were discovered the next morning peacefully slumbering underneath their bed, while, as for Burgo, Dan Muldoon, Hippocrates Burns and the Hon. Mike, they never came home at all, but were found locked in the city jail upon a charge of having stolen a freight car and attempted to go on a picnic down the railroad with it.

Rube's influence, however, soon procured their release, and the whole party were united once more.

Poor Rube suffered for his spree the next afternoon.

A raging toothache attacked him.

"Green-eyed grizzly bears!" bawled he, hopping about on one foot. "I've got the toothache."

"Put creosote in it," suggested the meek Hippocrates.

"Get out, you bloody jackass," wailed Rube; "where in blankety blank can I get creosote in this blankety blank town?"

"Try salt."

"Salt be blasted."

"Laudanum."

"Bang laudanum."

"Get it filled."

Rube fairly howled.

"Fill yer grandmother," he shouted; "do yer suppose there is a dentist on every block here? Most people what comes here don't live long enough to have the toothache. There ain't but one dentist in town, an' he's playing faro down at Diamond Bill's. He'd see me blow up with the toothache before he would leave his game."

As we are describing Deadwood as it was in its embryo state, before it assumed its present size, Rube was probably right.

He jumped and shrieked and pranced around as if he was crazy, for a man who can calmly smile while the surgeon is cutting off his leg will get up, and make a jumping-jack and a most unmitigated nuisance generally out of himself if he has the toothache.

Rube was no exception.

He was worse than a dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail.

Finally Muldoon struck a big idea.

"Have it pulled," said he.

"Who'll do it?" queried Rube.

"Me."

"You?"

"Yis."

"Did you ever pull teeth before?"

"Wonst."

"When?"

"I pulled two of Dan's."

"Did he, Dan?" asked Rube.

"Yes."

But Dan neglected to say that with the teeth came most of his jaw, and he had to lie in bed on his back and eat nothing but soup for a week.

Therefore Rube grasped the chance of relief like a darky at a watermelon.

Muldoon must pull his tooth then and there, or else Muldoon was no friend of his and would never leave Deadwood alive.

A stout string, or rather a rope, was procured.

By the combined exertion of the crowd, led by the alderman, it was adjusted about a tooth.

Then they deemed it best to retreat for certain reasons which will afterward be explained.

Muldoon took hold of the loose end of the rope.

Two stout miners assisted him to pull the tooth; two others held Rube, and the Hon. Mike acted as master of ceremonies with a pistol in his hand.

"I'm goin' ter celebrate that tooth coming out by shooting something," he declared.

## CHAPTER XIV.

It was agreed upon by all parties that Muldoon and his backers—the two sturdy miners—should start pulling Rube's tooth at the given signal:

"One, two, three."

The Hon. Mike was to say it.

He wanted to take some part in the plot, and it was settled upon that he would make a good starter.

Accordingly the Hon. Mike began slowly but with great unction, as if he was a small boy biting a green apple:

"One!"

Muldoon tightened his grip upon the rope and Rube shuddered visibly.

"Two!"

The backers on both sides braced up and prepared to settle their claims to muscular superiority.

"Three!"

Then there was a scuffle of feet on the sand, wild yells of dismay, and a sudden snap.

The string had broken!

Over into the dust rolled both sides, mingling in a sort of Chinese puzzle of feet and legs, while the Hon. Mike was so surprised that he nearly blew his head off with his pistol.

Slowly the participants picked themselves up.

"Begob, it wur the biggest tumble I iver tuk," remarked Muldoon; "the superhuman strength av this coterie necessitates an iron chain!"

Rube got up, grasping his jaw.

"Lions and long-legged ostriches," yelled he, "my jaw is broken an' my tooth aches worse nor it did afore. Jackass rabbits, if it don't get pulled out soon yer family will have no further use for yer, Muldoon."

"An' why?"

"Yer will arrive at San Francisco in a pine box, wid yer name an' age sculpted outside with care."

"Ah, we'll have the acher out in a trifle," consoled Muldoon.

"Has anybody a cable?"

Nobody had.

"Or a telegraph wire? Begorra, we'll fasten it to a pole, and have the tooth out by electricity."

A copper wire was also absent.

True, the Hon. Mike looked into his hat, and one of the miners examined the landscape, but no copper wire was to be seen.

"Well," sagely commented Muldoon, "we will have to do the encore wid the string. Mr. Growler, belay a fathom av it. It is great I am on nautical vocabulary. I dhrove a mule on a canal for twinty-wan days."

The string was doubled, and put around Rube's tooth again.

A long pull—a strong pull—and a pull all together, and presently Rube lay upon the ground, kicking and writhing in agony, with the blood spurting from his mouth.

Over him was Muldoon with the tooth dangling at the end of the string.

"Keno!" he shouted.

Suddenly a shot burst upon the air.

It was succeeded by a series of exclamations—which were simply prodigious in their profanity.

The Hon. Mike was hopping about shaking his hand like a turkey on a red-hot gridiron.

"Oh, I'm an old cyclone, and I kin blow over a pyramid, but I can't stand this," wept he.

"Luk at it—luk at it!" cried Muldoon, "the mountain air has given it the jim-jams!"

"Get out, yer Scotch tarrier," said Mike, as he pressed his hand under his arm-pit; "wait till I get my book—I'll put you down for Friday."

"Phwat book?"

"My murder book."

"Sure me son Danny has a piggy book, but divil a bit did I iver hear of a murder book. Phwat is it?"

"It's the book I put down duffers I mean to kill. I'll write you down for Friday morning. Jhewhacks—I'll make a double-header of it—I'll put down the bloody fool who made this blank pistol for Friday afternoon. Holy Jim! I'm a whooping old clam, an' I can squirt water, but I'll be blasted if I can stand this."

"Will ye kindly condescend to stop yer spasms and inform us av the wherefore av yer gymnastical ixercises?" politely requested Muldoon.

In reply, Mike held up a bloody finger.

"Is it a hemorrhage?" asked Muldoon.

"No, you chaw. I got it under the hammer of my pistol when it came down."



"Why didn't ye tell it to come off?"

"Oh, you go soak yer head," was Mike's retort. "You're getting too previous. I'm a four-winged eagle from Buzzard's Bay, I am, an' some day I'll get mad an' fly off wid yer an' drop yer into the Neapolitan sea!"

Here Rube interrupted the dialogue.

While it had been going on, he had been kicking upon his back, not quite sure whether his head was upon his shoulders or whether it was off.

At last he made up his mind that he was all there.

He arose slowly.

"Bald-headed bears," stuttered he. "I can never speak again."

"Phwat a pity yez ain't a woman," feelingly observed Muldoon.

"Why?"

"Ye wud be a treasure to the man who married ye. But yer tooth is out."

Rube put his finger in his mouth, and said he was uncertain whether it was his tooth or his lung. The cavity was big enough for either.

"Arrah, no joking," was Muldoon's reply. "Ye should indite me a vote av thanks for relieving yez. It is betther to have fits than the toothache."

Just then Rube stopped short in the laugh which he was about to let out.

His face paled, his mouth twitched, and his features became distorted.

"What a purty visage," Muldoon continued. "Lind me yez face till I go begging."

The tears actually stood in Rube's grizzled eyes.

"Sacred snakes—petrified Peter!" howled he. "I've got the toothache again. You blasted, big-mouthed son of a Digger Indian, you've pulled the wrong tooth!"

"Howly Mary!" gasped Muldoon, as he put around the corner of a house that stood near, as if his Satanic Majesty and all his imps were in close pursuit.

It was lucky he did.

Rube produced one of his ever-ready revolvers, and the next instant a ball whistled past Muldoon's ear.

"To think that I, who have escaped from the jaws av a say sarpint in Buzzard's Bay, wud live to be kilt by a dime novel hero," muttered Muldoon as he ran.

Rube chased him.

The spiteful crack of his revolver sounded at intervals as he chased the flying Irishman.

But Muldoon had sense enough to run in a line which may be defined as extremely irregular.

Consequently he could not be hit by any object much smaller than a balloon.

The result was that Rube hit houses and cows, Chinamen and trees; in fact, almost everything in range except Muldoon.

The nearest he came to his mark was to put a bullet through Muldoon's hat.

That, though, so Muldoon afterward remarked, didn't count.

"It is as good as a ventilator," he said. "Faix, I will get it walled in wid tin and swear I put it there meself wid an awl."

The chase continued till Rube's ammunition was exhausted.

Then he stopped, and Muldoon sought safety at his hotel.

The rest of the gang were already there.

They were standing upon the stoop as he rushed up, and they made various scoffing and uncivil remarks regarding the rate of speed at which he was progressing.

"It's a sky-rocket."

"It's a flying machine."

"Were ye running for a wager?" asked Dan.

"Divil a bit."

"Thin why yer velocity?"

"I was running for me loife."

"How?"

"Ye know I thried to pull a tooth?"

"Yes."

"I did."

"Did ye pull out his liver?"

"Worse."

"Break his jaw?"

"That wud be a bagatelle."

"Pulverize his gums?"

"I was more atrocious."

"Well, what did ye do?"

"I pulled out the wrong tooth. The next time I thry to be dentist I will have me patient covered wid a cannon!"

A roar of laughter ensued from the gang, and they indulged in various side smiles and winks.

Muldoon could not understand it.

"I suppose it is very comical," said he, in accents of irritation. "The soight av me laying in a coffin wid a bouquet in me button-hole would probably convulse ye wid laughter. The sympathy av yer heart will ruin ye fellows some day!"

"Shall I give it away?" asked Dan, of the Hon. Mike, who had just come up, with his thumb done up in a bandage big enough to hold a calf's head.

"Yes," was the reply, "give the Cuban nobleman light."

"Well," said Dan, "we put up a job on yer, Terry."

"Ye did?"

"You?"

"How?"

"We put the string around the wrong tooth."

"Which accounts for yer mysterious disappearance?"

"It does."

Muldoon reflected for awhile.

"Daniel Muldoon," said he, presently, "ye are me own flesh an' blood. We were born av the same father an' different mothers. But recollect, Daniel Muldoon, the Day av Judgment will soon come; an' when it does, ye will be away beneath the ruins."

"Oh, you go air yer teeth," was Dan's polite retort; and then the whole crowd went inside to the bar, and had a good drink on the strength of the racket.

That night they made a tour of Deadwood.

In a road Muldoon found a miner sleeping heavily in a fit of intoxication.

Now an intoxicated miner was not an unusual sight in Deadwood—indeed, a sober miner would have been a stranger one—but upon the sleeper's head rested a high hat.

Muldoon's heart was broke.

"Begorra," said he, "phwat is the good av shining for fame? I thought I had the only high hat in the place, and now here is a lush wid a higher."

"Steal it," suggested Edwardo Geoghegan.

"I will not," declared Muldoon. "I will confiscate it, Edwardo."

"What's the difference?"

"None av yez business. It is not versed ye are in bon-ton society. We upper eleven always say: 'Confiscate.' There is a bad odor to the wurrud stale which offends our delicate nostrils. Therefore I will confiscate the hat."

He did so.

"Be Heavens, I brook no rivals," he remarked, as he carried it along in his hand. "I belave I will put a firecracker into it, and blow it up!"

"Where are ye going to get the firecracker?" asked the alderman, who was always interposing some just such practical objection.

Muldoon was disgusted.

"Ye have no romance in yer sowl," he said. "I suspect if ye met an angel ye wud be axin' how much it paid for its wings."

"Romance niver bought radishes," replied the alderman; and with this original saw the dialogue ceased.

By and by, in the course of their extended rambles, they reached a grocery store.

Hippocrates Burns was seized with a strong and overpowering desire for a pickle.

Perhaps the fact that the poet had been indulging in too much liquid refreshment rendered his desire for a pickle stronger, but the fact still remained that he wanted one.

He had gone into a hardware and drug store after one, and had been ignominiously bounced out of six faro banks for interrupting the game by vociferous calls for the briny eatable, and yet his craving remained unsatisfied.

He wanted a pickle—and a pickle he was going to have—if it rained blood and brought on death.

"I want a pickle," he moaned, as he staggered on with his friends.

Now, usually, the conversation of a friend is interesting.

Yet, when such conversation is exclusively confined to deafening demands for a pickle, it gets most decidedly monotonous.

So Muldoon thought.

The grocery store appeared to him like a lighthouse to a distressed mariner who has lost his bearings.

"We are saved!" cried he; "Hippocrates—if there is a pickle in Deadwood ye can get it here."

That was sufficient for Hippocrates.

He made a rush into the store, followed by the rest.

Hippocrates approached the proprietor, who, by the way, was a burly Dutchman, rejoicing in the sweet-smelling name of Cheeser—Jacob Cheeser.

"Have ye a pickle?" queried Hippocrates.

Cheeser said "yes."

"I vos got several bickles," answered he; "vot kind of a von would you like?"



"Cucumber?" said Hippocrates.

"Yaw."

"Salt cucumber?"

"Yaw."

"How much?"

"Ten cents."

"Give me three," instantly said Hippocrates.

The trio of pickles were produced.

Hippocrates acted the part of a hog.

He took the three pickles, paid for them, and sitting down upon a nail-keg, commenced to devour them.

Muldoon called Dan aside.

"Dan," said he, "I have a great flash of intellect. Ye see that hat which I have?"

"Yes."

"There's where the joke comes in."

"Where?"

"In the hat."

"How?"

"List while I tell ye."

"Proceed."

"I will ordher a gallon av molasses."

"Do ye mane to spread it on yerself and masquerade as fly-pa-per?"

"Divil a bit. As I said before, I will ordher the gallon av molasses."

"Yis."

"I will put it into the hat."

"Yis."

"Thin I will give the grocery store sucker a tin-dollar note."

"What for?"

"To pay for the molasses, of course."

"Go ahead."

"He will make change."

"Probably; unless molasses has rose to an aquil value wid diamonds."

"To make change he will stoop down. He carries his wealth in a private drawer hid beneath the safe."

"I see."

"Thin I will ram the hat filled wid molasses upon his head. It will stick fast to his head, an' it will be a maniac ye will witness for a few minutes, Dan. Arrah, it is a rare practical joker that I am!"

Dan smiled sweetly.

"Go ahead," said he.

Muldoon proceeded.

He ordered the molasses.

He got it.

He freighted the hat with it.

Then, as he had planned, he gave the Dutchman who bossed the grocery store a ten-dollar bill.

The Dutchman bent down and pulled out the drawer beneath the counter in order to get change for the bill.

Muldoon was all smiles.

He raised his hat, filled to the brim with molasses, and looked exultantly about.

"See me drown the Prussian wid swateness!" whispered he.

Hardly had he uttered the words before his own hat was knocked off.

The next second the molasses-filled hat was jerked from his hands and jammed over his head, until its brim was on a level with his mouth.

Then there was a loud yell of merriment, a scurrying of feet, and a shutting of doors.

Above the racket Muldoon heard the guffaw of the Dutchman and his exclamation:

"Yaw—yaw—yaw! dot vos funny!"

Muldoon at last succeeded in pulling the hat off his head.

It was no easy matter, however.

The molasses was as sticky almost as glue, and it adhered very firmly to his person.

When he did, finally, get it off, he was about as mad a man as one could have found in Deadwood.

After he had wiped the treacle from his face and eyes, he gazed about the store.

No one was visible.

Except the Dutchman who owned the place.

He had Muldoon's change all arranged out upon the counter, and he was smiling all over.

"Yaw—yaw!" said he, "it vos funny!"

"What, ye Orangeman?" queried Muldoon.

"Dose fellows—de way dey put the molasses mit your head. Mein Gott! I dought you vos drowned!"

"Oh, they're intinsely witty," replied Muldoon; "it is fetch up on a gallows with a rope around their neck they will some day on account av their comicality. Phwat is in that barrel?"

The barrel to which Muldoon referred was one which held soft soap.

It stood outside of the counter, and was open.

The Dutchman had just purchased it that day, and was anxious about its welfare.

"What is mit it?" asked he.

"Come out and see," was Muldoon's response.

Seduced by the tone of Muldoon's voice, the unsuspecting child of Germany came out from behind his counter.

He looked upon the pulpy surface of the barrel.

"I see nodding," said he.

"Luk closer," answered Muldoon. "Be Heavens, they have filled it with frogs!"

The unsuspecting grocer bent over to look.

Quick as a flash Muldoon gave him a push which sent him head-long into the barrel up to his neck in soft soap.

"Faix," exclaimed Muldoon, as he rushed out of the store, leaving the poor Dutchman to his fate, "I was going to get square upon somebody if I had to tie a tin can upon a puppy's tail!"

The next day the whole crowd started off for San Francisco.

"Be Heavens," said Muldoon, "we must make haste or some wan ilse'll get me legacy before I do, if I expind too much toime on the road."

"I'm a rip tearin' old express train at a hundred miles a minute, and you can't go too fast fur me," said the Hon. Mike. "I want to see you get that money the wust way, Mul, and I'll stick to yer."

There was no doubt that he would, or as long as the money lasted, at any rate.

Dan, Burns, Edwardo, Burgo and the rest were equally anxious to get on with their journey, and when they were once more on the cars and going none too fast, either, they were all glad to be on the move.

"Aha," said Muldoon, "it's wanst more to the breach, me frinds, as me ould chum Shakespeare says, 'and it's proud I am to be on the rail again, for now, be Heavens, I feel that fe forchin is already in me grasp.'"

Perhaps it was not so close to him as Muldoon thought.

Who knows?

THE END.

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